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Jeroen Bosch, editor

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES



Too busy to study main lines? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

NEW IN CHESS

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

5

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1. $\text{f}3$ $\text{f}6$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{e}6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{a}6$ 4. $\text{g}2$ $\text{b}5!$

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1.c4 e5 2.♕c3 ♕c6 3.♕f3 ♕f6 4.d4 e4

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1.e4 c5 2.♕f3 ♕c6 3.♕c3 g6 4.a3!?

CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

The Practical Advantage of SOS

SOS-2, Chapter 2, p.17

In a Bundesliga match early this year Karsten Müller prepared a SOS line to surprise Rustem Dautov in his favourite (and solid) Caro-Kann. His plan worked wonders. Müller's opening advantage may not have been that special, but Dautov spent a lot of time overcoming the shock of 4.♟e5. Time which he duly lacked later on in the game.

□ Karsten Müller

■ Rustem Dautov

Germany Bundesliga 2005/06

1.e4 c6 2.♟f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♟e5

This was played for the first time in 1964 by Adolivio Capece, as mentioned in *Chess Today*. Under the title 'Refining Fischer's Plan' Ian Rogers examined the line in SOS-2.

4...♟d7

Or 4...♟c6 5.d4 ♟f6 6.♟b5! ♟d7 (best according to Rogers. Alternatively, 6...♟b6?! 7.c4! dxc4 (7...e6 8.♟c3 ♟b4 9.0-0 0-0 10.c5 ♟c7 11.♟f4 was clearly better for White in Broekmeulen-Mikanovic, Herceg Novi 2005) 8.♟c3 e6 9.♟a4 ♟d7 10.♟xd7 ♟xd7 11.♟e3 ♟d8 12.d5 ♟d4 13.dxc6 fxc6 14.0-0-0 ♟c5 15.♟xd7+! ♟xd7 16.♟xc4 and White was winning in Sebag-Xu Yuanyuan, Cannes 2004. This was the main game in SOS-2) 7.♟xd7 ♟xd7 8.c3 e6 9.0-0

(9.♟d2 ♟d6 10.♟f3 – this is possibly inaccurate because of Black's 11th move. The immediate 10.0-0 should be a bit better for White – 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♟e4 12.♟e1 f5 13.c4 a6 14.cxd5 axb5 15.dxc6 ♟xc6 16.♟g5 ♟xg5 17.♟xg5 ♟d5 and Black was somewhat better in Navara-Izoria, Ermioni Argolidas 2005) 9...♟d6 10.♟e1 0-0 11.♟d2 ♟c7 12.♟f3 (see page 21 of SOS-2) 12...♟e7 (aiming to regroup, and bringing a defender to the kingside. 12...h6 13.♟e2! (Rogers) is an improvement on Cernousek-Polak, Brno 2004. Best is possibly 12...♟e4 aiming for 13...f5, as in Navara-Izoria) 13.♟d3 ♟g6 14.g3 (controlling some important squares and preparing a future h4) 14...a6 15.♟e2 (15.h4? ♟xg3!) 15...b5 16.a3 (stopping a minority attack for some time) 16...♟ab8 17.♟e5 ♟xe5 18.dxe5 ♟d7 19.f4 and with two bishops and huge possibilities on the kingside White is much better. L.Bensdorp-Schuurman, Dutch Women's Championship, Leeuwarden 2005.

Mainly for historical reasons I should like to mention 4...♟f6 5.d4 e6 6.♟d2 (6.♟g5 ♟e7 7.♟d2 0-0 8.♟d3 ♟c6 9.♟df3 was the above-mentioned stem game Capece-Menna, Napels 1964) 6...♟e7 7.c3 (7.♟d3 0-0 8.0-0 ♟c6 9.♟df3 ♟c7 10.c3 a6 11.♟e2 b5 12.♟xc6 ♟xc6 13.a3 ♟b7 14.♟g5 ♟c7 15.♟e5 was very pleasant for White in Antoniewski-Graells, Martigny 2005) 7...0-0 8.♟d3 ♟bd7 9.f4 ♟e8 10.♟c2 f5 11.♟df3 ♟df6 12.h4 ♟d6 13.h5 ♟fe4

14. ♖e3 ♜f6 15. g4 ♜d7 16. g5 ♜e7 17. ♖h2 ♜e8 18. ♜g6, Capece-Nathans, Ybbs 1968. Both games by Capece were mentioned in *Chess Today* No.1893.

For 4...e6 see The SOS Files of SOS-3.

5.d4 e6



In the game Dautov will eventually take on e5, when play assumes a 'French' character. It is also possible to take on e5 immediately. 5...♜xe5 6.dxe5 e6 7.♜d3 ♖c7 (Black does not really threaten to take on e5, therefore 7...♜e7 is to be preferred) 8.0-0 ♜e7 (here 8...♖xe5 9.♜b5+ ♜d7 10.♜xd7+ ♜xd7 11.♞e1 followed by 12.c4 (Golubev) gives White a dangerous initiative) 9.♜c3 ♜d7 (again White gets more than enough for the pawn after 9...♖xe5 10.♞e1 ♖b8 11.♜b5+) 10.f4 g6 11.♜e3 h5? (11...♜f5 was best according to Golubev in *Chess Today* No.1890. Now White's game plays itself) 12.♜b5 ♜xb5 13.♜xb5+ ♜c6 14.c4 a6 15.♜xc6+ bxc6 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♞c1 ♖d7 18.♞f2!. White has a huge lead in development. The simple plan of doubling on the c-file gives a decisive edge: 18...♜e7 19.♞fe2 0-0 20.♞c7 ♖d8 21.♖a4 ♞e8? 22.♞d7 ♖b8 23.♞cc7 and White won in E.Berg-Velicka, Stockholm 2005/06.

6.♜d3 ♜e7

Before taking on e5, Dautov prepares the follow-up ♜e7-c6 to put pressure on e5. This

plan looks stronger than taking on e5 immediately followed by ...♖c7 as in Berg-Velicka.

7.0-0 ♜xe5 8.dxe5 ♜c6 9.f4

The position now resembles a French Defence rather than a Caro-Kann. White's game is slightly more comfortable.

9...♖b6+

Here 9...g6 10.♜d2 (10.c3) 10...♖b6+ 11.♜h1 ♜b4 12.♜e2 ♜d7 13.c3 (13.a3 followed by c4) 13...♜a6 14.♜b3 ♜e7 15.♞f3 ♜c5 16.♜e3 ♖c7 was quite playable for Black in Abel-Gagarkine, Pardubice 2005.

10.♜h1 ♜d7 11.c3 0-0-0



White can easily attack on the kingside due to his pawn structure (e5-f4), hence it is not illogical to castle queenside.

12.♖e2

Überdeckung of e5, and enabling White to develop his queenside.

12...f6

Black has to attack the e5-pawn to gain some counterplay.

13.♜e3 ♜c5

After 13...♖c7 White has 14.♜d4 g5 15.♜d2 gxf4 16.♜f3 f5 when according to Müller in *New In Chess Magazine* 2006/4 he can launch an attack with 17.a4 ♜b8 18.a5 ♞g8 19.b4.

14.♜xc5 ♖xc5 15.♜d2 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♞df8 17.♜f3 h6

White is better, his attack on the queenside is easier to organize than Black's on the kingside. White has slightly more space, and his bishop is stronger than Black's 'bad' bishop.

18.♖ac1 ♗b6 19.b4 ♘b8 20.a4 ♜c8 21.♙b5!? ♞hf8 22.♞d2 a6?

Müller's provocative 21st move pays off. The a-pawn is an easy target, enabling White to open the a-file. Correct was 22...g5 and Black also has his chances in this complicated position.

23.♙d3 ♙e8 24.b5 axb5 25.axb5 ♞e7 26.♞fe1 ♙g6

Dautov has at least manoeuvred his bishop out of the 'French' pawn chain.

27.♙xg6 ♞xg6 28.♞d4 ♞e7 29.♞a1 ♞f5 30.♞a2 ♞xd4

Müller indicated that the immediate 30...♞c7 is stronger, when play might continue: 31.♞xf5 ♞a8! 32.♞b2 ♞xf5 33.♞b4 and White keeps the initiative.

31.cxd4

Dautov has succeeded in exchanging all minor pieces. However, in the resulting position (with only heavy pieces) the safety of the king is often a deciding factor.

31...♞c7 32.♞a3 ♞d7 33.♞f1



33...♞f5?

Reportedly, Anand indicated 33...♞a8 as the only move, but 34.♞g3 g5 35.♞d3 ♞xa1

36.♞xa1 ♞c7 still promises White a clear advantage. After the text, played in huge timetrouble, Müller has an immediate win:

34.g4! ♞xf1+ 35.♞xf1

Now the threat of 36.♞f7+ can only be parried by entering a lost queen ending.

35...♞c7 36.♞c1+ ♘b8 37.♞xc8+ ♘xc8 38.♞f8+ ♞d8 39.♞xg7 ♞a5 40.♞f8+ ♞d7 41.♞d6+ ♞c8 42.♞xe6+ ♘b8 43.♞d6+ ♞a7 44.♞c5+ ♘b8 45.♞f8+ ♞a7 46.b6+! 47.♞c5 1-0

A Kortchnoi Surprise

SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40

When the living legend Viktor Kortchnoi takes up an SOS you know you cannot go wrong. In a recent game Kortchnoi favoured 4...♙d6 against the Spanish Four Knights to score a devastating win.

□ **Manfred Böhnisch**

■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**

Dresden 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♞f3 ♞c6 3.♞c3 ♞f6 4.♙b5 ♙d6

This line was recommended in SOS-1 and updated in the SOS-Files of SOS-2. Black avoids the possible simplifications that may arise after 4...♙b4 or 4...♞d4. Meanwhile, he intends a well-tested scheme of development – known from certain lines in the Ruy Lopez: ...0-0, ...♞c8, ...♙f8, and ...d5.

5.a4

The most common move is 5.d3. The text is more or less useful – it prevents ...a6 and ...b5, it reserves a square on the a2-g8 diagonal for the bishop, and it protects b5. A possible disadvantage (see the game!) is the

weakening of the square b4. Another idea behind White's fifth move is not to castle and to wait for Black to do so – in order to lash out with g4.

If White wants to make a useful waiting move then I would prefer the more restrained 5.a3 after 5...0-0 6.d3 h6?! (to stop g5, but it weakens the kingside. Instead 6...e8 7.g4 g5 was Yuldashev-Kayumov, Abu Dhabi 2004. See the SOS-files in SOS-2) 7.g4 (the main idea behind White's 5.a3) 7...a5!? (a new move for Black in this tense position. Smeets-Pavasovic, Wijk aan Zee 2004, went: 7...e7 8.gxc6! dxc6 9.h3 ♖d6 10.h4 ♘d5! 11.♙f5 ♙xf5 12.gxf5 ♘xc3 13.bxc3, see SOS-2)



8.g5 hxg5 9.gxg5 c6 (this was Black's idea) 10.h4 (very interesting is 10.d4!? cxb5 – not 10...exd4 11.♖xd4 e7 12.e5! – 11.dxe5 ♙xe5 12.♙xe5 and now 12...d6? fails to 13.♙d5 winning) 10...e7 (10...cxb5? 11.♙f5 e7 12.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 13.♙d5 ♘xd5! – otherwise White has a winning attack – 14.gxe7 ♙xe7 is better for White despite the material balance of three minor pieces for the queen) 11.♙f5 d5 12.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 13.exd5 cxb5 14.g4 (much better is 14.♖f3 when White prevents 14...g5 and threatens 15.g4; after 14...♖d6 15.gxf6 ♖xf6 16.♖xf6 gxf6 he

regains his sacrificed material with 17.b4 ♘c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 and has the better ending after, say 19.a4) 14...g5 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.♖d2 (16.b4 g6 17.bxa5 f5 with nice counterplay) 16...g6 (Black cannot save his piece with 16...b6? as 17.♖h6 ♙xe4 18.dxe4 mates) 17.h4?! (17.♖xa5! with a very strong position) 17...f5 18.d6 ♖e6 19.♙g5 ♖d5 20.♙g1 ♘c6 21.c3 ♙ad8 (21...a5) 22.h5 ♙xd6 23.0-0-0 ♖a2 24.♙f3 b4! 25.♖c2 (25.axb4 ♘xb4!, and 25.cxb4? a5!) 25...b3 26.♖b1 ♖xb1+ 27.♙xb1 ♙f8 28.h4? ♙xd3 and Black won in T.Willemze-Berkvens, Hilversum 2006.

Nothing special is 5.gxc6 dxc6 when after 6.d4 Black has 6...b4!. Possible is the boring 6...g4 7.dxe5 gxf3 8.♖xf3 ♙xe5 9.g4 ½-½ Külaots-Gausel, Gausdal 2003. Slightly better for White is 6...exd4 7.♖xd4 ♖c7 8.g3 b4. The game Kargin-Hector, Copenhagen 2005, continued: 9.0-0-0 e6 10.g5 e5 11.♖d2 h6 12.h4 g5 13.♙xg5! hxg5 14.gxg5 ♙g8 15.h4 ♙d6 16.♖d4 with an advantage.

Spraggett-Bruzon, Buenos Aires 2005, went: 5.d3 a6 (5...h6) 6.g4 h6 7.♙e2 0-0 8.♙g3 ♙e8 9.a3 b5 10.g3 ♙f8 11.0-0 d6 12.gd2 e6 13.gxc6 ♙xe6 14.c4 bxc4 15.dxc4 ♙d4 16.g5 ♙xf3+ 17.♖xf3 ♖b8 18.♙ab1 ♖b7 19.♙fel c6 20.♖e2 g6 21.♙ed1 ♙b8 22.♙f1 d5 with an easy game for Black.

5...0-0

An earlier game with 5.a4 saw: 5...a6 6.g4 e5 7.d3 d6 8.g5 h6 9.gxf6 ♖xf6 10.♙d5 ♖d8 11.c3 (this is a position from the Canal Variation in the Italian with the moves a4 and ...a6 included. The difference clearly favours Black) 11...0-0 12.b4 g7 13.h3 ♙h8! 14.0-0 f5 (with a strong initiative) 15.♖c2 fxe4 16.dxe4 ♙e7 17.♙ad1 ♙g6 18.♙d2 e6 19.g2 ♙xd5 20.gxd5 c6 21.g3 ♖e7 22.g3 ♙f6 23.♙d3 ♙af8 24.g2 d5 25.h4

♖f4 and White resigned in Zvedeniouk-Zhao, Sydney 2005.

6.d3 ♖e8 7.♗c4

This prevents the natural 7...♗f8 on account of 8.♗g5.

7...h6 8.g4

This was White's idea! He has refrained from castling to be able to play this bayonet attack the moment that Black prevents ♗g5 (or ♗g5) with ...h6. Kortchnoi has a nice resource up his sleeve though!

8...♗b4! 9.g5 d5!



This is it! Black strikes in the centre in reply to White's flank attack. 'Viktor the Terrible' already holds a huge advantage.

10.exd5

For 10.gxf6 is answered by 10...♖xf6! 11.♗xd5 ♗g4.

10...♗d4 11.h3

Not 11.gxf6? ♗g4 and Black wins. Best was 11.♖g1 but after 11...♗g4 12.♖xg4 ♗xg4 13.h3 ♖d7 14.hxg4 ♖xg4 Black is much better.

11...♗xd5 12.♗d2 ♗f4 13.♗xf4 exf4+ 14.♗f1

Now Kortchnoi simplifies into an easily won position.

14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xf3 16.♖xf3 ♖xg5 With a pawn up in a superior position. **17.♖b1 c6 18.h4 ♖f6 19.a5 ♖b8 20.d4 ♗f5 21.♗d3** Not 21.♖xf4??

♗d3+. **21...♗e6 22.♖h5 b6 23.axb6 axb6 24.f3 ♖bd8 25.♗e4 25.♖xb6??** ♖d5 traps her majesty. **25...c5 26.♗f2 cxd4 27.♖xb6 dxc3 28.♖c5 ♖d2+ 29.♗e1 ♖d8** **0-1**

Quick wins in Alapin's line

SOS-1, Chapter 8, p.73

Some openings are more popular than others. This holds true for SOS lines as well. A case in point is Alapin's 2.♖d3 against the Dutch. OK the early queen move may not be the refutation of the Dutch, but it is sufficiently tricky to merit some attention. Yet, Alapin's line has been played in surprisingly few games ever since its publication in SOS-1. Possibly the next miniature win by the young German GM Baramidze will whet your appetite?

□ **David Baramidze**

■ **Stefan Lupor**

Bad Wiessee 2005

1.d4 f5 2.♖d3

Here it is. White attacks f5 and prepares a quick e4. Black's possibilities are restricted.

2...d5

Black is virtually forced to go for the Stonewall, and this is one of the points of 2.♖d3. How many Leningrad players like to be forced into playing such a solid but inflexible pawn structure? Both 2...g6 3.e4 fxe4 4.♖xe4 ♗f6 5.♖h4, and 2...e6 3.e4 fxe4 4.♖xe4 ♗f6 5.♖h4 are preferable for White.

White should answer 2...d6 with 3.g4 (less good is 3.e4 since Black gets an edge in development after 3...fxe4 4.♖xe4 ♗f6 5.♖h4 ♗f5) 3...fxg4 4.h3 with interesting play. Now returning material with 4...g3 is perhaps sensible, but White's game remains preferable after 5.fxg3 ♗f6 6.♗g2 or 6.e4.

Taking the pawn with 4...gxh3 gives White ample compensation after 5.♖xh3, or 5.♗xh3 ♖f6 6.♗g5.

The recent game I. Schneider-Grafl, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06 went: 4...♖f6 5.hxg4 ♗xg4 6.♗h3 (it is important to exchange the light-squared bishops, emphasizing the weaknesses in Black's position. Still, in New In Chess Magazine Schneider indicated that 6.f3! ♗e6 7.e4 is even stronger) 6...♖d7 7.♗xg4 ♖xg4 8.♖f3 ♖bd7?! (Schneider proposes 8...♖c6 as entirely satisfactory for Black) 9.♞h4!



9...♖e6 10.♖c3 ♖b6 11.♗g5 ♖c4 12.♖h3 ♖bd5 13.♖xd5 ♖xd5 (13...♖xd5 14.♖e6 ♖f7 15.♗g5+ ♖e8 16.c3±, Schneider) 14.♞xh7 ♞xh7 15.♖xh7 ♖f6 16.♖f5 ♖xd4?? (missing a devastating check) 17.♖b5+ c6 18.♖xb7 ♞d8 19.♖xc6+ ♞d7 20.♖c8+ ♞d8 21.♖xd8+ and Black resigned.

3.g4!

White is prepared to sacrifice a pawn to destroy Black's Stonewall. 3.♗f4 is not bad either, see SOS-1.

3...e6

Better is 3...fxg4 4.h3 g3, and now both 5.♖xg3 and 5.fxg3 are possible.

4.c4

4.gxf5 exf5 5.♗f4 was my recommendation in SOS-1.

4...c6 5.♖c3 ♖f6 6.cxd5 ♗xg4

Of course not 6...exd5? 7.gxf5. White's game is also preferable after 6...exd5?! 7.gxf5 exf5 8.♗g5 and Black will have trouble keeping his d5-pawn. Black may consider 6...♖xd5 though.

7.dxe6 ♗xe6 8.♖f3

Black's central pawns have disappeared. So, he must try and control the central squares d5 and e4 with his pieces. This explains his next retreat.

8...♖f6

However he could have considered 8...♖a6 followed by 9...♖b4.

9.♞g1!?

The start of a fine career!

9...g6 10.♗g5

Aggressive play by Baramidze.

10...♖e7?!

In answer to 10...♗d5 White plays 11.f3! to prepare e4.

11.♞g3!



Attaboy! Due to the unusual ♞g1-g3-c3 manoeuvre Black is in grave difficulties.

11...♖e4?

Black is already throwing in the towel, but 11...♖h5 shouldn't save Black either after 12.♞e3 (12.♞f3) 12...♖f4 (12...♖xg5?? 13.♞xe6+ and 12...♗g7 13.♖xe6 ♖xe6 14.d5 wins) 13.♖d1 ♖xg5 14.♞xe6+ ♖d8 (14...♖d7 and now both 15.♖b3 and 15.d5 win for White) 15.d5 c5 16.♖a4 ♗h6 17.d6 which is disastrous for Black.

12.♟cxe4 fxe4 13.♞xe4 ♟f5

Black aims to play an ending with a pawn down, but Baramidze is ruthless.

14.♞f4 ♟d8 15.♞e3! ♞d7 16.♟e6+!
♟c8 16...♟xe6 17.♞f6+ ♟c7 18.♞xh8
17.♟xf8 ♞xf8 18.♞e5 This is some rook – White wants to play 19.e4. **18...♞f7?**
 18...♞d8 19.e3 with a pawn (and a position) up. **19.e4 ♟d7 20.exf5 ♟xe5**
21.dxe5 ♞xf5? 22.♟h3 and Black had enough. **1-0**

Crushing the Benoni Wall

SOS-2, Chapter 3, p.23

In SOS-2 Alexander Beliavsky demonstrated a direct approach to destroy the Benoni Wall. In the game below Ildar Ibragimov adds a convincing example.

□ **Ildar Ibragimov**

■ **Emory Tate**

Las Vegas 2005

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.♟c3 d6 4.e4 ♟e7

Black plays the solid Benoni Wall hoping to exchange the dark-squared bishops (♟e7-g5) to keep firm control over the dark squares. Ibragimov's next was endorsed by Beliavsky and first played by Alekhine.

5.f4! ♟f6

Tate, not illogically, tries to take advantage of 5.f4 by immediately placing the bishop on the main diagonal. The main line is 5...exf4 6.♟xf4 and now:

– 6...♟f6 7.e5 (this is too direct, it makes sense to first develop a few pieces and only then to play for the push e4-e5. Instead, 7.♟b5+ was played by Beliavsky against Dvoretzky in 1975, whilst 20 years later he preferred 7.♟e2 against Ivanovic) 7...dxe5 8.♟xe5 0-0 9.♟e2 ♞e8 10.♞d2 ♟d6 (this

neutralizes White's play and equalizes) 11.♟xd6 ♞xd6 12.♟f3 ♟g4 13.0-0 ♟xf3! 14.♟xf3 a6 with an even position in Ilincic-Kosanovic, Pancevo 2005.

– 6...♟h4+ (this check does not disturb White) 7.g3 ♟f6 8.♟b5 ♟xb2 9.♟d6! (to keep Black's king in the centre) 9...♞a5+ 10.♟f2 ♟f6. To prevent 11.♟c7+, but White calmly continued with 11.♟g2! ♟a6 12.♟f3 ♟d7 13.a4 ♟g4 14.♞b1 with an obvious advantage, White won after 14...♟d4 15.♟bxd4 cxd4 16.♟b5+ ♟d7 17.♞xd4 f6 18.e5 ♟xf3+ 19.♟xf3 0-0-0 20.♟xa6 1-0 Karr-Gregoire, French tt, Montpellier 2006.
 – Note that 6...♟g5 7.♞d2 ♟xf4 8.♞xf4 ♞f6 9.♞xf6 ♟xf6 does not relieve Black's plight. Beliavsky now analyzes the pawn sacrifice 10.♟b5! ♟d7 11.♟f3! see SOS-2, p.25. More spectacular was the course of Sturua-Himdan, Dubai 2006: 7.♟xg5 ♞xg5 8.♟f3 ♞e7 (8...♞e3+ 9.♞e2 ♞xe2+ 10.♟xe2 and White has an edge in development) 9.♟b5+ ♟d7 10.0-0 f6 11.c5! fxc5 12.♟xe5! dxe5 13.d6 ♞e6 14.♞d5 ♞xd5 15.♟xd5 and Sturua won.

6.♟f3 ♟g4

Black increases his control over square e5 with this pin. Black has problems after 6...exf4 7.♟xf4. A quick e4-e5 can be annoying, just like the occasional ♟c3-b5.

7.♟b5+ ♟f8

Awkward, but the alternative is worse: 7...♟d7 8.0-0 a6 9.♟xd7+ ♞xd7 10.fxe5 ♟xf3?? (10...♟xe5 11.♟xe5 dxe5 12.♞e1 with a huge positional advantage, while 10...dxe5 11.♞e1 likewise, is much better for White) 11.exf6! wins on the spot!

8.0-0 exf4

A novelty for what it is worth. Black will not be in time to control the e5-square. In Maksimovic-Djuric, Bjelovar 1979, 8...♟xf3 9.♞xf3 ♞e7 was played. White now went for the strong 10.g4!, see SOS-2.

9.♟xf4 a6

I would prefer 9...d7, though this may be answered by 10.e5 dxe5 11.d3 as well. Moves like d4 and d5-d6 are in the air.

10.d2 xf3

After 10...d7 11.e5 g6 (11...dxe5 12.dxe5±) 12.exf6 dxf4 13.fxg7+ xg7 14.d2 dxe2+ 15.dxe2 Black's king is in mortal danger.

11.dxf3 d7 12.e5!



A fine positional pawn sacrifice.

12...dxe5 Here 12...dxe5 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.d6 dxc6 15.d5 wins, for example 15...f6 16.dh5 d8 17.fxf6+ gxf6 18.dh6 mates. **13.d3** d7 **14.g4** This opens the f-file and attacks an important defender. **14...h5 15.dxh5** Even stronger than 15.dxd7 dxd7 16.dxc5. **15...b6 16.d6** g8 The alternatives are no fun either. Thus, 16...dxc6 is simply met by 17.dxc5, and 16...dxd5 17.dxd5 dxd5 18.dxd5 dxh5 19.d7 just loses. **17.d4** Or 17.dxc5. **17...c8** Or 17...d4 18.dxc5 and if 18...b6 then White has 19.dg5!. **18.dxc5** 18.dg5 was also very strong. **18...d7 19.d3** White has a material and a positional advantage. The Benoni Wall has been well and truly destroyed. **19...c6 20.c4** g6 Or 20...dxc4 21.d5 winning. **21.d4** dxc4 **22.d5** b6 **23.dxb7** b4 **24.ac1** g7 **25.c7** and Black resigned.

Double Surprise in the Bundesliga

SOS-3, Chapter 8, p.71

In the concluding rounds of the German Bundesliga (played in one weekend) two interesting games were played with the SOS line versus the French – 3.d3. The evening before the penultimate round Henrik Rudolf was wondering what to play against the French Defence that he expected to meet. Enter Stefan Löffler (not a team-mate!) who suggested that he might like to give 3.d3 a try. The bishop move worked wonders for Rudolf who won after a mere 16 moves. The position after his 11th move is given in SOS-3 with the accompanying verdict by GM Bluvshstein that 'White is simply much better'. The next day, Rainer Polzin, who plays for the same Berlin-based team as Rudolf, was surprised by 1...e6 and as a counter-surprise decided to give 3.d3 a try as well. Polzin, having emerged from the opening with a secure advantage too, had to work a bit harder eventually grinding down his opponent in a queen ending. So, 2-0 for 3.d3!

□ Rainer Polzin

■ Michael Richter

Germany Bundesliga 2005/06

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.d3

Here we are sinning against the rules of proper development by putting the bishop out before a knight. In SOS-3 Canadian GM Mark Bluvshstein explains his liking for this non-theoretical set-up. One of the main ideas is that 3...d6 is now met by 4.e5 dxd7 5.d3 c5 6.c3 when White is much better compared to similar positions from the Advance Variation or the Tarrasch Variation. Black's most logical continuation is 3...dxe4 followed by 4...d6 hitting the bishop and thus winning a tempo for his development. **3...dxe4**

Bluvshtein also examines 3...c6 and 3...c5. Against the latter move French GM Robert Fontaine sacrificed a pawn for considerable compensation with: 3...c5 4.exd5 (4.c3 c6 5.c2 cxd4 6.cxd4 b4 7.b5+ d7 8.d7+ xd7 9.e5 was about equal in Bluvshtein-Degraeve, Montreal 2002) 4...xd5 5.c3! xd4 (5...xg2?? 6.e4 wins the queen) 6.f3 d8 7.e4 with a huge edge in development. 7...a6 8.e2 d6 9.d6 xd6 10.e4 c7 11.0-0-0 f6 12.d6+ and White had more than enough for the pawn in Fontaine-Popov, Moscow 2005.

4.e4 f6 5.f3

An unusual spot for the bishop. However, it is useful to put pressure on Black's queenside along the main diagonal.

5...c6

Development first, but is Black forgetting about his c-pawn? Much the most logical move is 5...c5 when after 6.e2 c6 7.e3 we reach an important position for the whole line. In SOS-3 several moves are now investigated: 7...e5, 7...d5 and 7...cxd4. Also mentioned is the move that Henrik Rudolf encountered in his Bundesliga game: 7...xb6 Bluvshtein calls this 'quite risky' in view of 8.dbc3 cxd4 (8...xb2 9.dxc5) 9.dxd4 e5 10.dxc6+ bxc6 11.0-0



when SOS-3 concludes that 'the threat of a4 is coming', while 'Black's pieces are badly misplaced.' So true, so true. Let's see

how Rudolf-Rausch, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06 concluded: 11...d5 12.a4 xe3 (or 12...a5 13.dxc5 xe3 (13...xc5 14.dxe6!) 14.dxc6!, and 12...b4 13.c3) 13.fx3 xa5 14.h5! (this wins on the spot as 14...xa4 15.xf7+ d8 16.ad1 is game over) 14...g6 15.xc5 xa4? 16.dxc6 and Black resigned.

6.e2 d6 7.dbc3 d7 8.g5

Both sides have developed their light pieces (following the rules of the development after all). White has more space, and his bishops are more actively placed. Black now tries to reduce the pressure, but slightly compromises his position in the process.

8...h6 9.dh4 g5 10.g3 e7

Here 10...g4 11.ec4± dxe4?! 12.dxe4 dxg3 13.hxg3 is better for White.

11.d2

Preparing to castle queenside.

11...e5?

Black is forcing his hand, better was 11...0-0-0.

12.dxc6

This leads to a simple position where White's advantage is clear. Much harder to evaluate is 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.dxb7 b8 when Black clearly has his chances too.

12...dxc6 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.dxe5 xe5 15.0-0-0 0-0



So both sides have completed their develop-

ment. But while White's king is safely tucked away on the queenside, Black's king will remain in permanent danger because of the pawn on g5. Polzin in fact demonstrates in the game that White is better, not so much because of Black's weakened kingside, but because of his slight lead in development (there is already a rook on d1, and White is to move here) and the vulnerability of Black's queen.

16. ♖d4! ♗e4

Black loses after 16... ♗xg2 17.f4! ♜xf4 18. ♜xf4 gx4 19. ♞hg1 f3 20. ♖xf3.

17. ♞he1

Polzin continues to play 'simple chess', and is not distracted by possible attacking chances on the kingside.

17... ♞ad8 18. ♖xe4

Also good is 18. ♗e3.

18... ♖xe4 19. ♗e3 ♞fe8 20. f3 c5

The only move. Not 20... ♖f2? 21. ♗xe5 ♞xe5 22. ♞e5 ♖xd1 23. ♖f5 and Black loses his knight.

21. ♗xe4 ♗b8

White will be a pawn up in the endings arising after 21... ♗xe4 22. ♞e4 cxd4 (22... ♞e4 23.fxe4 cxd4 24.c3) 23. ♞dxd4.

22. ♖c6!?

Or 22. ♗f5.

22... ♞xd1+

22... ♞xe4 23. ♖xb8 ♞xe1 24. ♞xe1 ♞xb8

25. ♞c7 and, owing to the rook on the seventh

rank, White has a very safe edge. Slightly better than the game continuation was

22... bxc6 23. ♞xd8 (23. ♗xc6 ♞xe1 24. ♞xe1 ♗f4+

25. ♖b1 ♗xh2) 23... ♞xd8 24. ♗xc6 ♗f4+

25. ♖b1 ♗xh2.

23. ♞xd1 bxc6 24. ♗xc6 ♞e6 25. ♗xc5 ♗xh2 26. b3 ♗xg2

Material is equal, but Black's king is in danger (an important feature in endings with heavy pieces).

27. ♞d8+ ♖h7 28. ♗f8 ♖g6 29. ♗g8+ ♖f6 30. ♞d7 ♞e7

30... ♗h1+ 31. ♖b2 ♗h5 32. ♞xa7 ♗g6 33. ♗h8+ ♗g7 34. ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 and White is better positioned for the upcoming pawn-race.

31. ♗h8+ ♖e6 32. ♞d3!

White is winning.

32... ♗g1+ 33. ♖b2 ♗h2 34. ♞e3+ ♖d7

35. ♞d3+ ♖e6 36. ♞e3+ ♖d7



37. ♗d4+

Polzin transfers to a winning queen ending. Also winning is the computer line 37. ♞c3

♞e6 38. ♗c8+ ♖e7 39. ♞c7+ ♖f6 40. ♗h8+ ♖g6 41. ♗g8+ ♖h5 42. ♗xf7+ ♞g6 43. ♞e7.

37... ♖e8 38. ♞xe7+

Here 38. ♞c3! wins more easily.

38... ♖xe7 39. ♗xa7+ ♖f8 40. ♗c5+ ♖g7 41. ♗d4+ f6 42. a4 White is a pawn up, his queen is better placed, and his passed pawns run faster. The verdict is not in doubt.

42... ♗c7 43. b4 h5 44. b5 h4 45. b6 ♗b8 46. ♗c5 Intending

47. ♗c7, but he could have won a tempo with 46. ♗d7+ ♖g6 47. ♗c7+.

46... h3 47. ♗c7+ ♗xc7 48. bxc7 h2 49. c8 ♗h1 ♗

50. ♗b7+ ♖h6 51. ♗c6! ♖g6 52. a5 and White won after: 52... ♗g1

53. a6 ♗d4+ 54. c3 ♗d2+ 55. ♖b3 ♗d1+ 56. ♖b4 ♗a1 57. ♖b5 ♗b2+

58. ♖a5 ♗b3 59. a7 ♗a3+ 60. ♖b6 ♗b3+ 61. ♖c7 ♗f7+ 62. ♖b8 ♗f8+

63. ♗c8 ♗d6+ 64. ♗c7 1-0

Light Relief*SOS-2, Chapter 12, p.91*

In SOS-2 Igor Glek wrote an interesting article on two gambit lines against his own Glek Variation. In SOS-3 we returned to the wildest of them – the piece sac 4...♖xe4 – because of the brilliant (and SOS-Prize winning) game Sengupta-Petrosian. The present game once again illustrates how quickly Black can score when White takes up the gauntlet after 4...♖xe4.

□ **Jason Chan**■ **David Smerdon**

Queenstown 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♖c3 ♗f6 4.g3
♖xe4 5.♗xe4 d5 6.♖c3 d4 7.♗b1



If you play 4...♖xe4 you have to be prepared for players who will just return the piece to enter a theoretical main line in the Glek Four Knights, i.e. 7.♗g2 dxc3 8.bxc3.

Glek's main line in SOS-2 was 7.♖b5 a6 8.♖a3 c4 9.♖h4 ♗xa3 10.bxa3 0-0. Tom Chivers, one of our SOS-readers, has suggested that Black should play the more forcing 10...g5. After 11.♗g2 ♖e5 Black appears to be doing fine after 12.♗e2 ♗h3. Perhaps White should return material with 11.♗g2 gxh4 12.0-0!? (12.♗xe4 ♗h3 is unpleasant).

The other option is 7.♗e4 f5 8.♗eg5 e4 9.♗c4 exf3 10.♗f7+ which was Sengupta-Petrosian, Kochin 2004 (see SOS-3).

7...e4 8.♗e2?!

A new move, that has no eternity value. Glek mentioned 8.♗g1 returning all pieces to their starting positions in SOS-2.

8...♗e7 9.♗g1

The inclusion of ♗e2 and ...♗e7 makes Black's next possible.

9...♖b4! 10.♖a3 d3 11.♗e3

Or 11.cxd3 ♖xd3+ 12.♗d1.

11...dxc2 12.♗g2 f5 13.♖e2 ♖d3+ 14.♗f1**14...♗e5?! 15.f4**

White could have taken advantage of Black's previous move with 15.♖f4!, the idea being that 15...♖xc1 is met by 16.d4!. Correct is 15...♗xa3! 16.♖xd3 ♗b5 17.bxa3 ♗xd3+.

15...♗e6 16.♖d4 ♗f6 16...♗a6!? 17.♗xe4

White returns the piece, but this brings no relief. Perhaps he should just grovel with 17.♖axc2.

17...fxe4 18.♗xe4+ ♗e7 19.♗xd3 ♗h3+ 20.♖e1 0-0-0 and Black wins because he regains the piece with interest.
21.♖axc2 ♗c5 22.g4 ♗he8+ 23.♗f2 ♗xf4+ 24.♗f3 ♗xd4+ 25.♖xd4 ♗xd4+ 0-1

CHAPTER 2

Lubos Kavalek & Jeroen Bosch

Closed Sicilian: Vinohrady Variation



1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g4

Remember the story about Kasparov playing with Black in the 1997 Fontys tournament in Tilburg against the young American Tal Shaked? In a topical line of the Exchange Variation of the Grünfeld (1.d4 Qf6 2.c4 g6 3.Qc3 d5 4.cxd5 Qxd5 5.e4 Qxc3 6.bxc3 Qg7 7.Qe3 c5 8.Wd2) Kasparov had found a powerful novelty which he had duly analysed with his seconds Makarichev and Dokhoian and computer-checked to perfection. After the sequence 8...Wa5 9.Nb1 b6 10.Qb5+ Qd7 11.Qe2 Qc6 12.Qd3 Qd7 13.Qe2 the boss played his novelty 13...Nd8!. Tal Shaked realized the strength of this move after using up an hour of his time, and lost ignominiously after 14.f3 0-0

15.h4 h5 16.Qg5 Nfe8 17.Nc1 Qb7 18.d5 Qe5 19.Qb1 Qc4 20.Wf4 Qe5 0-1.

Now, Kasparov was not at all happy about the 'free' point he had just scored. He complained about the hours of analysis that he had thrown away on a player 300 elo-points below his strength. In his own words, he had just spent an 'atomic bomb to kill a fly'. Not all players could sympathize with Kasparov's plight, especially not Michal Krasenkow who drily remarked that Kasparov should have been happy to have been able to employ the novelty at all. Krasenkow had found the same novelty, but had got no chance yet to throw this atomic bomb (and now never would).

It is not so unusual for players to find strong novelties independently of each other – at different places, but at almost the same time. And indeed, the same sort of thing happens in scientific research as well. It seems sometimes as if a certain idea is simply ‘in the air’. This is also the case with the Bayonet Attack in the Closed Sicilian that is the subject of this chapter. Around 1965 the creative Canadian Duncan Suttles ‘invented’ this line. He inspired his compatriot Lawrence Day to take up the variation too. But please remember that news did not travel fast forty years ago.

Around the same time in 1965, the 3.g4 variation was introduced in international competition by prominent Czech players Michael Janata (co-winner at the 1963 World Junior Championship) and Lubos Kavalek (who became international grandmaster also in 1965) at the Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Romania. It was employed as well in the same year by Czech juniors Vavruska and Petras in domestic events. Neither the Canadian branch, nor the Czech branch, knew of the developments on each other’s continents.

The evidence before us suggests that the matter of chronology – who was the first to employ this line – can be satisfactorily solved. The Czechs win the historical battle hands down. It is Jaromir Kubicek who deserves full credit for being the first to invent and employ 3.g4 in the late 1950s. Lubos (formerly Lubomir) Kavalek will explain the origin of the Vinohrady (vineyards) Variation in his notes. Indeed, all historical information regarding the Czech branch of the ‘viculture’ is by Kavalek. Gerard Welling, René Olthof and Adrian Mikhalchishin have all provided further background information and notes on this spicy Closed Sicilian.

Let us start with a light junior game by Kubicek to get into the right spirit.

□ Jaromir Kubicek

■ Petr Stecher

Prague 1958

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 d6 4.d3 ♘f6

Not the best reply, Kubicek played 3.g4 not only as a kind of extended king’s fianchetto. Stecher’s 4...♘f6 provokes Kubicek into playing his main idea: pushing the kingside pawns as in, say, the Keres Attack in the Sicilian.

5.g5 ♘g4?! 6.h3 ♘ge5 7.f4 ♘g6?! 8.h4! e6 9.h5 ♘ge7 10.♘f3 e5

Here 10...d5 was preferable.

11.f5 g6? 12.f6 ♘g8 13.hxg6 fxg6 14.♘h4!

White has a won position. Black cannot prevent ♘xg6 as 14...♗f7? 15.♘xg6 ♗xg6 16.♞h5 mates.

14...♘xf6 15.gxf6 ♞xf6 16.♘d5 ♞d8 17.♘xg6 ♞g8 18.♞xh7 ♗e6 19.♞h5 ♗f7 20.♞xf7 ♞xf7 21.♘h8+ ♞g7 22.♞h6

Mate.



Obviously, Black did not put up much resistance, but the game shows how dangerous Kubicek’s set-up can be.

It was in 1965 that Kavalek employed 3.g4 in an important international tournament.

□ **Lubos Kavalek**
 ■ **Jan-Erik Westman**
 Sinaia tt preti 1965 (2)

(notes by Lubos Kavalek)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4

'The Czech Double-Punch', as called by the Soviet grandmaster and theoretician Alexander Konstantinopolsky because it was also played by Michael Janata in the same match against Sweden. We named the line 'The Vinohrady Variation,' after a district in Prague where we both went to school. The spiritual father of the variation was Jaromir Kubicek, another member of our school team and a romantic player with passion for the King's and other gambits and for various unusual openings. Janata was the best player on our school team and he later went on to tie for first at the 1963 World Junior Championship with Florin Gheorghiu. Our school won the Prague scholastic championship several times. During the 1965 Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Romania, Janata and I were roommates. When we decided to introduce the Vinohrady Variation to the international scene on the same day on our boards, it caused a huge stir in the tournament hall. Kubicek's idea influenced other players from Prague. The variation took off after I published comments to this game in the Czechoslovakian monthly *Ceskoslovensky Sach*, and other Czech players began to use it. From the 1965 comments: 'The move 3.g4 can't be easily refuted and it provides a good opportunity for an opening surprise. The main idea is to grab space and save a tempo in the attack from the usual slow build-up with 3.g3. The disadvantage could be the weak dark squares f4 and h4, but that is not easy to exploit it. For example, after 3...e5, White can play 4.♙c4!'

3...g6 4.d3 ♙g7 5.♙e3 d6 6.♙g2 ♚b8
 Janata was less successful against Dahl.

That game went: 6...♙d7 7.h3 b5 8.♚d2 ♚b8 9.f4 e6 10.♙f3 b4 11.♘d1 ♘d4 12.0-0 ♘e7 13.c3 ♘xf3+ 14.♙xf3 ♚a5 15.f5?! bxc3 16.bxc3 exf5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♙g5 ♙e5 19.gxf5 ♚g8 (Black takes advantage of the open g-file) 20.♙g4 f6 21.♙h6 ♙xf5 and Black was winning.

7.f4 e6 8.h4!



'Black played the opening rather passively, allowing me to gain space on the kingside and have a more comfortable game.'

8...♘ge7 9.h5 b5 10.♚d2 ♚a5

'Black plans to strike with 11...b4 and 12...d5, but White prevents it with a little combination that keeps the black king in the middle.'

11.e5! dxe5

'Black is curious to find out what White really means. Otherwise he would play 11...d5 although after 12.♘ce2 White is better.'

12.h6 ♙f8 13.♙xc5 ♚c7 14.♘ge2 b4

'Calculating all possible variations in such a complicated position is not practical, but while my opponent was thinking I tried not to waste time: 14...exf4 15.♘xf4 ♚e5+ 16.♘e4 ♘d5 (16...f5 17.d4 ♚c7 18.♘d6+ ♘d7 19.♘f7 ♚g8 20.♙d6+-) 17.♘xd5 ♙xc5 (17...exd5 18.d4 ♚e6 19.0-0-0 dxc4 20.♙xf8 ♘xf8 21.d5 ♚e5 22.dxc6+-) 18.♘f6+ ♘f8 19.0-0-0 b4 20.♙xc5 ♚xc5 21.d4 ♚d6 22.d5 exd5 23.♚xd5 ♚xd5

(23... ♖xf6 24. ♖c5+ ♗e7 25. ♖xc6 ♖b7 26. ♖b5) 24. ♖xd5 ♖d8 25. ♖he1 ♖e6 26. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 27. ♖d7+ ♖xd7 28. ♖xd7 ♖e8 29. ♖xe8+ ♖xc8 30. ♖xa7 ♖f8 31. a4+— and White wins (See *Ceskoslovensky Sach* 10/1965 p.151). But such calculations cost a lot of energy and are not to be recommended. **15. ♖e4 ♖d5 16. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 17. fxe5 ♖xe5 18. ♖g5**

Locking up the kingside with 18.g5 is better. **18... ♖a6**

Here 18... ♖xg4?! is not playable because after 19. ♖xg4 ♖e3 20. ♖f3 ♖xc2+ 21. ♖f2 ♖xa1 22. ♖f6 ♖g8 23. ♖xa1 White should win.

19. 0-0 ♖d7 20. ♖f4!

Exchanging Black's best piece.

20... ♖xf4 21. ♖xf4 ♖e8 22. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 23. ♖xf6 ♖f8 24. ♖e1!

Threatening 25. ♖xc6+!

24... ♖b6 25. ♖d4 ♖e7

Relatively the best. After 25... ♖d6 26. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 27. ♖e4 ♖e7 28. ♖e5 f6 29. ♖xc6 White wins.

26. g5! ♖b7 27. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 28. ♖e5 ♖c7

Allowing a sharp combination. The queen exchange 28... ♖xf6 loses fast: 29. gxf6 ♖d7 30. ♖xb4 ♖d8 31. ♖b7 ♖d7 32. ♖cb5 and wins. Also after 28... ♖d7 29. ♖c4 wins.



29. ♖xe6+! fxe6 30. ♖xe6+ ♖e7 31. ♖c8+ ♖f7 32. ♖f4+ ♖g8 33. ♖xf8+

♖xf8 34. ♖xb7 ♖c5+ 35. ♖h1

Black has no good check and White threatens 34. ♖g7 mate. Westman could have resigned.

35... ♖d4 36. ♖g7+! Simplifying into a winning pawn endgame. **36... ♖xg7 37. hxg7 ♖xg7 38. ♖g2 h6 39. gxh6+ ♖xh6 40. a3 a5 41. axb4 axb4 42. c4 ♖g5 43. c5 1-0**

One month before the start of the Student Olympiad in Sinaia, Duncan Suttles had already won effortlessly in the Canadian Championship with 3.g4.

□ **Duncan Suttles**

■ **Joseph Kaltenecker**

Vancouver ch-CAN 1965 (5)

1. e4 c5 2. ♖c3 ♖c6 3. g4 d6 4. ♖g2

In 1968 Kubicek played in a small tournament in The Hague. I will give the game in full, as you won't find it in your database. At the time, Kubicek chose the more restrained 4.h3 The game continued 4...g6 5.d3 ♖g7 6. ♖e3 e6 7. ♖g2 ♖ge7 8. ♖d2 h6 9. ♖ge2 ♖d4 10. ♖g3 ♖b8 11. f4 f5 12. gxf5 cxf5 13. ♖d5 ♖d7 14. c3 ♖dc6 (Kubicek now sacrificed a pawn to open files against the Black king) 15. e5!? ♖xd5 16. ♖xd5 dxe5 17. 0-0-0 ♖e7 18. ♖b3 ♖c7 19. ♖hg1 ♖f8 20. ♖de1 b5 21. fxe5 c4 (Black appears to get considerable counterplay, but Kubicek has seen further) 22. e6! cxb3 (22... ♖xe6 23. ♖f4) 23. exd7+ ♖xd7 24. axb3 (material is equal, but the difference in the safety of the respective kings is striking) 24... ♖c8 25. ♖h5! ♖xc3 26. bxc3 gxh5 27. ♖xh6 ♖d4 28. ♖g7 ♖b4 29. ♖b2 ♖d6 30. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 31. ♖g5 1-0 Kubicek-Van Halderen, The Hague Candidates Group 1968.

4...g6 5.d3 ♖g7 6.f4?!

Kavalek played 6. ♖e3 against Westman.

which is probably stronger (and more flexible).

In the Czech Army Championship, August 1965, 6.g5!? was tested successfully in two games:



- 6...h5 7.h4 ♖d4 8.♗ce2 ♜b6 9.c3 ♘c6 10.♘f4 e6 11.♖c2 ♗ge7 12.♗ge2 e5 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.exd5 ♘c7 15.♗g3 ♗g4 16.♗e4 (White is somewhat better. Black now decided to castle queenside, but White's initiative develops strongly after his 17.b4 and 18.♞b1) 16...0-0-0 17.b4 ♘b8 18.♞b1 ♗c8 19.♘f1 ♘f5 20.♘d2 ♜c7 21.♘c4 f6 22.♗a4 ♗d7 23.♗a3 ♞c8 24.bxc5 ♗xc5 25.♗a6 b6? (White also wins after 25...♖c7 26.♗xf5 ♗xf5 (26...gxf5 27.♗e3 b5 28.♘xd6) 27.♗c3) 26.♗a3 1-0 Petras-Hora, Prague 1965.

- 6...h6 7.h4 hxg5 8.hxg5 ♞xh1 9.♗xh1 ♗d7 10.♗e3 ♗g4 11.♗xg4 ♗xg4 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♗ge2 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 e6 15.♗g2 (White has a definite edge in this ending) 15...♗ge7 16.♞h1 ♗e8 (16...♞h8? 17.♞xh8+ ♗xh8 18.♘b5 wins) 17.♞h7 ♗d4 18.♗d2! White is clearly better and won in the end. Vavruska-Goeth, Prague 1965.

Lawrence Day has played 6.h4. When practice has seen:

- 6...e6 7.♘h3 ♗ge7 8.♘f4 to prevent Black from playing ...d5, Day-Vranesic, Canadian speed championship, Kingston 1968.

- After 6...e5 Day recommends 7.♗e3 or even 7.g5 or 7.♘d5, but not 7.f4?! h5 8.f5 hxg4 9.♗xg4 ♘d4 with an edge for Black in Day-Martin, Ontario tt 1966.

- 6...♘f6 7.g5 ♘h5?! 8.♗d2 ♘d4 9.♞b1 ♗e5 10.♗ce2 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗e6 12.f4 ♘xe2 13.♘xe2 ♗g7 14.♗f3 (14.f5 gxf5 15.♗f3) 14...f5 15.♗xh5 gxf5 16.♘g3 fxe4 17.♘xh5 ♗f8 18.dxe4 and White was superior in Day-Spencer, Ontario Open 1967.

- 6...h6?! 7.f4 e6 8.♗e3 ♗ge7 9.♗ge2 ♘d4 10.♗d2 ♞b8 11.♘g3 b5 12.h5 b4 13.♘d1 a5 14.c3 bxc3 15.bxc3 ♘b5 16.a4 ♘c7 17.hxg6 fxg6 18.f5 with a considerable edge in Welling-Catteau, Douai 1992.

6...e5! 7.f5



Consistent with his previous move.

7...g5?

Good was 7...h5! 8.fxg6 ♗h4+ 9.♖f1 hxg4 10.gxf7+ ♘xf7 11.♗e3 ♗ge7 as was noted in *Canadian Chess Chat*. White's king is in more danger than Black's. Note that the immediate check on h4 brings nothing special: 7...♗h4+ 8.♖f1 and 8...h5 runs into 9.g5!

8.h4 h6 9.hxg5 hxg5 10.♞xh8 ♗xh8 11.♘f3 f6 12.♖f2 Black is locked up on the kingside with no counterplay in sight. **12...♗d7 13.♘d5 ♗h7?** This merely gains White a tempo later on. **14.c3 ♞b8 15.♗e3 ♗g7 16.♗b3 ♗f8 17.♞h1 ♗g7 18.♞h5 ♘h6 19.♖g3 ♘f7??** This

loses on the spot, but Black's position is unenviable anyway. **20. ♖h7 1-0**

Suttles later refined his bayonet attack with 3.d3, only continuing with 4.g4 after 3...d6 or 3...g6. His main reason was to avoid 3.g4 e6 which is one of Black's strongest options (see Hort-Kindermann below). Kavalek, by the way, does not approve of the subtle 3.d3, feeling that White loses the important option of 3.g4 e5 4.♗c4!.

□ **Duncan Suttles**

■ **Samuel Reshevsky**
New York ch-USA 1965

1.e4 c5 2.♗c3 ♗c6 3.d3

So here is Suttles' preparation of the bayonet attack. Suttles by this time avoided 3.g4 because of 3...e6 when Chernikov-Titenko, RSFSR Championship 1966, went: 4.♗g2 ♗ge7 (for 4...h5 see Hort-Kindermann below) 5.f4? d5 6.e5 ♗g6 and Black was already better.

3...d6

After 3...g6 Suttles also played 4.g4. Let us examine a few games:

– 4...♗g7 5.h4 d6 (Lawrence Day has indicated that Black can play 5...♗xc3+! 6.bxc3 d5 with at least equal chances) 6.h5 gxh5 7.♖xh5 ♗f6 8.♖h4 h6 9.f4 ♗d7 10.♗g2 ♗c7 11.♗h3 0-0-0 12.♗f2 ♗b8 13.♗e2 h5 14.g5 ♗g4 15.♗h3? ♗b6? (Black wins on the spot with 15...♗xb2! 16.♗xb2? ♗e3) 16.c3 and White won, Suttles-McCormick, U.S. Open 1966.

– 4...♗g7 5.♗g2 d6 6.♗h3!? e5 7.♗g5 f6 8.♗e3 ♗ge7 9.f4 exf4 10.♗xf4 ♗e5 11.h3 0-0 12.♗d2 ♖b8 13.a4 b6 14.0-0 a6 15.b3 ♗7c6 16.♖f2 ♗d4 17.♖af1 and White was somewhat better in Ranniku-Belova, Riga 1968.

– 4...e6 5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.h4 ♗ge7 7.♗e3 d6 8.h5 ♗b6 9.♖b1 ♗d7 10.a3 f5 11.gxf5 exf5

12.♗ge2 ♗e5 (12...♗d4 13.b4 ♗g4 14.bxc5 ♗a5 15.♗d2 ♗xe3 16.fxe3 ♗xc5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 19.exf5 ♗c6 20.d4! ♗xf5 21.♗xc6+ bxc6 22.♗f4 ♗g4 23.♗h2 ♗f6 24.♗d2 0-0-0?! 25.♗e4 ♗f5? 26.♗xf6 ♗xf6 27.♗e2 g5 28.♗h5 ♗f5 29.♗a6+ ♗d7 30.♖b7+ 1-0 Woodhams-Neumann, World Junior Championship, Jerusalem 1967.

– 4...d6 5.♗g2 e5 6.h4!? ♗e7 7.g5 ♗e6 8.♗h3 h6 9.♗d5 hxg5 10.♗xe7 ♗xe7 11.♗xg5!? ♗d7 12.c3 0-0-0 13.♗e3 f6 14.♗f3 (Black is no worse) 14...♖f8?! 15.b4! f5 16.♗g5 ♗f7 17.bxc5 fxe4 18.dxe4 ♗g4 (18...dxc5 19.♗d6 ♗g4) 19.♗h3! ♗d7 20.♗xg4 ♗xg4 21.♗d2 ♗g2 (21...♗xd1+ 22.♖xd1 dxc5) 22.♖f1 dxc5 23.♗b3 ♗g4?! 24.f3 ♗d7 25.0-0-0 (late but effective!) 25...♗c7 26.♗c4 ♗f7 27.♖d5 ♗f6? 28.♗d6 1-0 Suttles-Blackstone, A.B. Stamer Memorial 1966.

4.g4 e5

Against this ...c5 line (bearing down on the dark squares), White should probably go for a restrained set-up with h3, ♗g2, and f4. The passivity of the light-squared bishop is an important argument for Kavalek to prefer 3.g4 e5 4.♗c4!.

5.♗g2 ♗ge7



Black refrains from fianchettoing his bishop, and immediately concentrates on the weakened f4- and h4-squares.

6.h4! ♖g6 7.h5 ♜f4 8.♙xf4 exf4
9.♗d5!



White is ok here (but not better). Reshevsky is up to the task and temporarily sacrifices a pawn.

9...g5 10.hxg6 fxg6 11.♗xf4 ♙g7
12.c3 ♜g5 13.♗d5 0-0 14.f4

Suttles prefers to give back the pawn, rather than play the passive 14.f3.

14...♜xg4 15.♜xg4 ♙xg4 16.♙h3
♙xh3 17.♗xh3



The ending is equal. Reshevsky, as the stronger player, won in the end (51 moves).

So what should we prefer: 3.g4 or 3.d3? Let us return to the Czech vineyard. In 1964 Kubicek and Kavalek played a vigorous consultation game against Vlastimil Jansa and Polish IM Jacek Bednarski.

□ Kubicek/Kavalek

■ Jansa/Bednarski

Prague, consultation game 1964

1.e4 c5 2.♗c3 ♜c6 3.g4 e5 4.♙c4! d6
5.d3 ♙e7 6.h4!?

Gaining space on the kingside, and in line with Kubicek's general idea of 3.g4. Jansa and Bednarski now take the forbidden fruit.

6...♙xh4?



7.♜f3

Romantic play by Kubicek and Kavalek. Meanwhile it was stronger to trap the bishop with 7.g5! after the forced sequence 7...♙xg5 (7...♙xf2+ 8.♜xf2 does not give enough of course) 8.♜h5 ♙e7 9.♜xf7+ ♜d7 10.♜xg7 White has regained his material with interest. For example: 10...♗f6 11.♙g5 ♜f8 12.♜xf8 ♜xf8 13.♙h6 with a clear endgame advantage.

7...♙f6

Black should prefer 7...♙e6! 8.♙xe6 fxe6 when in answer to 9.g5 he has 9...♗d4! 10.♜h5+ g6 11.♜xb4 ♜xc2+ 12.♗d1 ♜xa1.

8.g5!

Consistent.

8...♗d4 9.♜g3!

Kubicek/Kavalek continue in the style of Morphy. The whole game is actually played in the Romantic spirit of the 19th century.

Possibly, the format of the consultation game is conducive to attractive play?

9...♙e7

Instead 9...♜xc2+ 10.♚d1 ♜:xa1 11.gxf6 g6 gives the whites a lot of play too.

10.g6!!



10...fxg6 11.♞xh7!

The point of the previous move.

11...♞xh7 12.♞xg6+ ♚d7 13.♞xh7 ♜f6 14.♞xg7 ♜xc2+ 15.♚d1 ♜xa1 16.♙g5 ♚c6

Jansa and Bednarski decide to play the middlegame with their king on c6. Play alters radically after 16...♞f8 17.♞xf8 ♙xf8 18.♙xf6 ♙e7 which could be about equal.

17.♜d5! ♜xd5 18.exd5+ ♚b6

The alternative is 18...♚c7 19.♙xe7 ♞d7 when 20.♜f3 ♞f5 21.♜g5 ♞g4+ 22.♚d2 ♞f4+ 23.♚e2 ♞g4+ is a draw by repetition.

19.♙xe7 ♞d7 20.♞f8 a6

An unclear ending arises after 20...♞a4+! 21.b3 ♙g4+ 22.f3 ♞xf8 23.bxa4 ♞e8 (23...♙xf3+ 24.♜xf3 ♞xf3 25.♙d8 mate!) 24.♙xd6 ♙d7 The sequence ...♞a4+ and ...♙g4+ was possibly missed by the blacks.

21.♙xd6 ♚a7

Now not 21...♞a4+ 22.b3 ♙g4+ 23.f3 ♞xf8 24.bxa4 ♙xf3+ 25.♜xf3 ♞xf3 26.♙xe5 winning.

22.♙xc5+

Better was 22.b3!

22...b6 23.♙e3



23...♙b7?

The final chance for 23...♞a4+ 24.b3 ♞xa2 (24...♙g4+? 25.f3 ♞xf8 26.bxa4 ♙xf3+ 27.♜xf3 ♞xf3 28.d6! should win) 25.♞e7+ ♙b7 and a perpetual is in the air.

24.♞f6 ♞c7 25.a4! a5 26.b4!

Kubicek and Kavalek continue in the same energetic style with which they have played the entire game.

26...♞g8 27.♜f3 axb4 28.a5

and the whites won...

Such chess is clearly inspiring. It is therefore not surprising that 3.g4 has always been the choice of the Czech players. In 1983 one of the strongest players of Czechoslovakia, Vlastimil Hort employed the Vinohrady Variation in a TV game against Stefan Kindermann. The German player countered with 3...e6 and Hort suffered a horrible defeat.

□ Vlastimil Hort

■ Stefan Kindermann

Bath TV 1983

1.♜c3

Always in for a joke!

1...c5 2.e4 ♜c6 3.g4 e6!? 4.♙g2

According to Mikhalchishin 4.♘ge2 is weaker, although he feels that 4...d5 5.♗g3 d4 6.♘ce2 ♖h4 7.h3 ♙d6 8.d3 ♘ge7 9.f4 g5 10.♙f2!? leads to a complicated position.

4...h5!?

We have already noted that 4...♘ge7 5.f4? d5 6.e5 ♘g6 was unpleasant for White in Chernikov-Titenko, RSFSR Championship 1966. Stronger is 5.d3 ♘g6 (5...d5 is the alternative) 6.♘f3 ♙e7 (6...d5 7.h4 d4 8.h5 is all right for White) 7.g5 d5 8.h4 with interesting play.

Not 4...♗f6 5.g5 ♘g8 6.h4, or 4...g6 5.d3 ♙g7 6.f4 ♖h4+ 7.♙f1 and White is better as Black will lose time moving his queen again, while White has gained some useful space on the kingside.

5.gxh5 ♗f6 6.d3 ♙xh5 7.♘ge2 d5 8.♘g3

It was worth trying 8.♘f4 ♙e5 9.0-0 when, after all, the rook on e5 is in danger. 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 ♖xd1 11.♘xd1 b6 12.♘d3 ♙h5 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♘e3 ♘de7 15.♘c4 gave White something to play for in P.Roth-Miniböck, Austrian ch, Wolfsberg 1985.

8...♙h8 9.♙g5 ♙e7



10.h4?

Bad is 10.♙xf6? ♙xf6 11.exd5 ♙xc3+ 12.bxc3 exd5 when White's kingside is very weak. However, 10.♖d2 (Mikhalchishin) is clearly better, planning immediate

queenside castling with a reasonable position.

10...g6

Weaker was 10...d4 11.♘ce2 e5 12.♘f5!.

11.♖d2 d4 12.♘ce2 e5 13.a3?

Clearly better was 13.f3 ♘h5 14.0-0 f6 15.♙h6 (Mikhalchishin).

13...♘g4 14.♙xe7 ♖xe7 15.♖g5 ♙e6 and Black's position is slightly preferable. 16.♘g1 0-0-0 17.♖xe7 ♘xe7 18.♘f3 f6 19.♙e2 c4 20.♘f1 ♙d7 21.♘1d2 cxd3+ 22.cxd3 ♙c8 23.♙a1 ♙xc1 24.♙xc1



Kindermann now coordinated his forces to devastating effect with

24...g5! 25.hxg5 ♘g6 26.♗e1? ♘f4+ 27.♙f1 ♘h2+ 0-1

In recent times the only Czech grandmaster to play the Vinohrady Variation is Marek Vokac. He concurs with his compatriots and plays 3.g4 rather than 3.d3 followed by 4.g4.

□ Marek Vokac

■ Stefan Koch

Forchtenberg 2003 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 e5

3...d6 4.h3 ♘d4 5.♙g2 e5 6.d3 ♙e7 7.♙c3 ♖a5 8.♘f3 ♙e6 9.♘d2 ♖d8 10.♘d5 (to be

able to evict the knight from d4 with c3. White's chances are preferable) 10...♘f6 11.c3 ♘c6 12.g5 ♘d7 13.h4 f5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♗e4 (with a clear positional edge) 15...0-0? 16.♖b3 and White won a pawn (and soon the game). Vokac-Jirovsky, Pribram 1998.

4.♗g2

Not following in the footsteps of Kubicek/Kavalek with 4.♗c4.

4...d6 5.d3 g6

Black can aim to control the dark squares with 5...♗e7 (preparing the exchange of the dark-squared bishops) 6.♘d5 ♞b8 7.h3 ♗g5 8.♘e2 ♗xc1 9.♖xc1 ♘ge7 10.f4 0-0 (10...♘d5 11.exd5 ♖h4+ 12.♖f1 with chances for both sides) 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♞f2 ♘xe2+ 13.♞xe2 and White has some advantage in Vokac-Frolik, Czech Team Championship 2004/05.

Black can also try to control f4 and h4 by means of the knight. 5...♘ge7 6.♘h3 ♘g6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 exf4 9.♘xf4 ♗f6 10.♘fd5 ♗e5 11.g5 ♗e6 12.♘b5!? 0-0 13.c3 a6 14.♘a3 h6 15.♖h5! with the better game in Fabian-Dolezal, Czech Championship, Lubacovice 1968.

6.h3 ♗g7 7.♘ge2 ♘ge7 8.f4



8...f6

8...exf4 9.♗xf4 0-0 10.♖d2 gives White a slight edge.

9.f5

Boxing in Black's kingside. White has won the opening battle.

9...♗d7 10.♗e3 ♘d4 11.♘g3

Not allowing Black to exchange a set of minor pieces. As usual, White will later chase the knight from d4 with c3.

11...♗c6 12.♖d2 ♖d7 13.♘d1 b6 14.c3 ♘b5 15.a4 ♘c7 16.a5 b5 17.0-0 18.d4



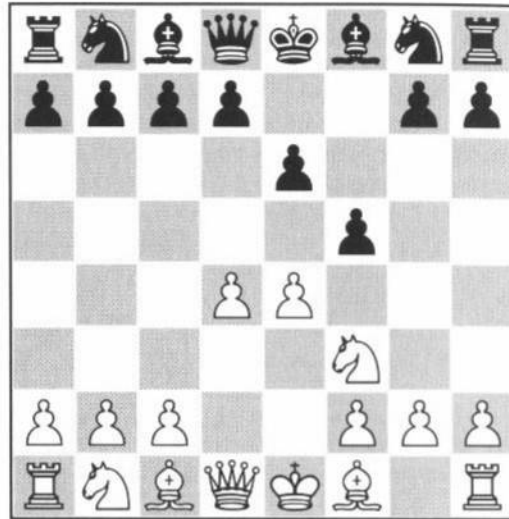
White is better in the centre and on both flanks! It looks like a Ruy Lopez gone wrong for Black.

18...♘a6 19.♘f2 ♖c7 20.d5 ♗e8 21.b3 ♘h8 22.h4 ♘g8 23.g5 Our audacious pawn continues his march. 23...b4 24.c4 ♞b8 25.♗h3 ♖d8 26.♖g2 ♞b7 27.fxg6 hxg6 28.♗g4 fxg5? Opening the h-file, but Black's position is without prospects anyway. 29.hxg5 ♘e7 30.♞h1+ ♖g8 31.♗e6+ ♗f7 32.♘g4 ♗xe6 33.dxe6 ♘c6? 34.♖d5 ♖e8 35.e7+ ♞f7 36.♘f6+ ♗xf6 37.gxf6 and Black resigned.

CHAPTER 3

Nigel Povah

The Deferred Staunton Gambit



1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 f5 3.e4!?

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 f5 3.e4!?

With his last move White enters a rare variation (there are only 35 games in the 2006 Mega Database!) which is a type of Deferred Staunton Gambit that was first played in 1990 by GM Joel Benjamin. It was then adopted by the Spanish GM Juan Bellon Lopez, who in his typical dynamic style won several attractive games with it. Since then it has been employed as a surprise weapon by players of varying strength, although it is rarely essayed by grandmasters who perhaps distrust White's direct approach. However, this line is gradually winning some advocates and is achieving a number of successes, the most

notable of which is Gretarsson's victory over Smyslov.

With his last move, White announces his aggressive intentions, being willing to have his knight displaced in the interest of a quick kingside assault on the white squares.

3...fxe4

Black has little choice but to accept the offered pawn, as both 3...♘f6 4.exf5 exf5 5.♗d3 d6 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♞e1 0-0 8.♘g5 and 3...d5 4.cxf5 exf5 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 give White a comfortable edge.

4.♘g5 ♘f6

The main choice, but Black has an interesting alternative in the immediate 4...d5!? 5.f3

h6 (5...e7 6.fxe4! e5g5 7.♖h5+ g6 8.♗xg5 ♗xg5 9.e5g5 dxe4 10.c3 with a pleasant edge) 6.♘h3 exf3 (6...f6 transposes to Variation E) 7.♗xf3 (7.♘f4!? is an interesting suggestion from former Australian champion John-Paul Wallace: 7...fxg2 8.♗h5+ ♘d7 9.e5g2 ♘f6 10.♗e2 with compensation for the pawns) 7...♗h4+ 8.g3?! (stronger was 8.♘f2 ♗xd4 9.e3d3 ♘f6 10.e6g+ ♘d8 11.0-0 with compensation) 8...♗xd4 9.e3d3 ♘f6 10.e6g+ ♘d8 11.♘f4 ♘c6 12.c3 ♗e5+ 13.♘e2 d4 with a clear advantage, Povah-Hinks-Edwards, England 2005.

5.f3!?

White has also tried 5.♘c3 e7?! (the more sensible 5...d5 transposes to Variation E) 6.♘cxe4 b6 7.e3d3 ♘e4 8.♘xc4 e4 9.♗h5+ g6 10.♘d6+! cxd6 11.e5g6+ hxg6 12.♗xh8+ ♘f7? 13.♗h7+ ♘f6 14.h4 ♘f5 15.f3 e5 16.♗f7+ 1-0 Sierra Canoso-Sanchez Piquero, Asturias Championship 2001.



Black now has a number of options:

- A) 5...c5
- B) 5...exf3
- C) 5...e3
- D) 5...h6
- E) 5...d5

Variation A

5...c5

This is Black's most popular choice.

6.fxe4 cxd4 7.e3d3

White continues with his policy of rapid development, rather than wasting time recapturing the pawn with 7.♗xd4, which was played in Sokolin-Litus, Katowice 1991: 7...♘c6 8.♗e3 b6 9.e3b5 e3 10.♗h3 0-0 11.♘c3 e2+ 12.♘d1 h6 13.♗f1 e4 and Black was slightly better.

Nor did 7.c3 work out for White after 7...♘c6 8.e3b5 ♗a5 9.♗e2? dxc3 10.bxc3 ♘d4+ Grechkin-Ovetchkin, Russian Team Championship 1996.

7...♘c6



Black has also played 7...e3d6 here, although this usually transposes after 8.0-0 ♘c6 or 8...e3 9.♘d2 ♘c6.

Another attempt to deviate is 7...♗a5+!? 8.e3d2 e3b4 9.e3xb4 ♗xb4+ 10.♘d2 ♗a5 (10...♗xb2? 11.e5 wins, after 10...♘c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.e5 ♘xe5 13.♘xh7 ♘xd3 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.cxd3 Black's exposed king and lack of development gives White at least equality) 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗h5 13.♘c4 0-0 14.e5 ♘g4 Povah-Bigg, England 2005, when 15.h3! would have given White a clear advantage 15...e3 (15...♘h6 16.♘xd4! ♗xd1 17.♗axd1 ♗xf1+ 18.e3xf1 or 15...e3gxe5??

16. ♖fxe5+-) 16. ♖xe3 dxe3 17. ♖e2 b6. Note that Black cannot take on e5: 17... ♖xe5? 18. ♖xe5 ♜xf1+ (18... ♖xe5 19. ♖xh7+--)) 19. ♜xf1 ♖xe5 20. ♖f3 ♖f6 21. ♖e4 ♖h6 22. ♖b4 winning.

8.0-0 ♖d6

The usual choice, although Black can also fight for control over e5 with 8...d6 9.c3!± (9. ♖d2!?) 9...h6 10. ♖f3 ♖e7 11.cxd4 0-0 12. ♖c3 e5 13. ♖c4+ ♖h7 14. ♖h1 ♖g4 15. ♖e3 ♜e8 16.dxe5 dxe5 17. ♖d5 with a slight edge for White in Benjamin-Machulsky, New York 1990.

But not 8... ♖c7? when White's attacking possibilities became apparent with 9. ♜xf6! ♖e5 (9...gxf6 10. ♖h5+ ♖e7 11. ♖f7+ ♖d6 12. ♖f4+--)) 10. ♜f2 h6 11. ♖f7 ♖xf7 12. ♖h5 1-0 Kipper-Stolte, Germany Bundesliga B 2000/01.

9. ♖d2



White has also tried 9. ♖a3!? ♖e5 (9... ♖e5 10. ♖b5 ♖b8 11. ♖h1 0-0 12. ♖xd4 ♖fg4 13. ♖df3 h6 14. ♖h3 b6 15. ♖e2 ♖b7 16. ♖d2 ♖d6 17. ♖xe5 ½-½, Del Rey-Arizmendi Martinez, Ibi 1996) 10.b4 0-0 11. ♖c4 a6 12.a4 d6 13. ♖d2 ♖e8 14. ♖e2 ♖g6 15. ♖xd6! ♖xb4 16. ♖f5 ♖c6 17. ♖h4 ♖e8 18. ♜ab1 with compensation for the pawn, Bellon-Lopez-Vega Holm, Spanish ch 1994. But 9.c3?! is less convincing: 9...dxc3 (9...0-0 10.cxd4 ♖xd4 11. ♖e3 ♖e5 12. ♖c3

h6 13. ♖h3 d6 Eriksson-Hansen, Gausdal 1990, also favoured Black) 10. ♖xc3 ♖e5 11. ♖f3 ♖e7 12. ♖h3 b6 13. ♖e3 ♖b7 14. ♖f3 0-0 15. ♜ae1 ♜ae8 when White had a difficult struggle to prove he had enough play for the pawn, Bellon-Lopez-Rothen, Swedish Team Championship 1998/99.

9... ♖e5

Anticipating White's threat of ♖c4, Black has also tried:

- 9... ♖e7 guarding the bishop, but after 10. ♖c4 ♖e5 White was able to exploit the fact that the queen was overloaded with 11. ♜xf6! gxf6 (11... ♖xc4 12. ♖h5+--)) 12. ♖h5+ ♖g6 13.e5! 0-0 14.exd6 ♖g7 15. ♖e4 b5 16. ♖h6 ♖f7 17. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 18. ♜f1 ♖xf1+ 19. ♖xf1 ♜f5 20. ♖g4 bxc4 21. ♖xc4 ♜f7 22.h4 ♖b7 23.h5 ♜f6 24. ♖xd4+- Jensen-Sobjerg, Aarhus 1991.

- Stronger is 9... ♖e5 with spectacular complications after 10. ♖c4! (10. ♖df3?! h6 11. ♖xe5 hxg5± Povah-Williams, England 2004) 10... ♖xc4 11. ♖xc4 ♖c7 (11... ♖xh2+? 12. ♖xh2 ♖c7+ 13.e5!+-; 11...0-0 12. ♖d3) 12. ♜xf6! ♖xh2+ 13. ♖h1 gxf6 14. ♖h5+ ♖e7 15. ♖f7+ ♖d6 16. ♖xf6 ♖xc4 17. ♖xh2 (or 17. ♖xh8 ♖g3 18. ♖d2 with balanced chances) 17... ♜g8 18. ♖f7+ ♖c7 19. ♖e5+ ♖b6 20. ♖d6+ ♖c6 21. ♖b4+ ♖b5 22. ♖d6+ and White has no more than a repetition.

10. ♖c4 0-0 11. ♖xe5

Alternatively, 11.c3 d6 12. ♖h1 dxc3 13.bxc3 h6 14. ♖f3 ♖xc3 15. ♜b1 d5 16.exd5 exd5 17. ♖a3 dxc4 18. ♖xc4+ ♖h8 19. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 20. ♖d3 ♖b4 21. ♖h4 with a dangerous attack, Bellon Lopez-Vaiser, Helsinki 1991, but the immediate 11...dxc3 seems to favour Black:

- 12. ♖xe5 ♖b6+ 13. ♖h1 cxb2 14. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 15. ♖c4 ♖b5 with a slight advantage.

- 12.bxc3 ♖xc3 13. ♖a3 ♖xa1 14. ♖xa1 b5, with a winning position.

11... ♖xe5 12. ♖f4 d6 13. ♖xe5 dxe5

14. ♖e1! ♜c7 15. ♗g3 ♘d7 16. ♗f3
 ♙c6 17. ♞ae1 ♚d7 18. ♗g5 ♚c5
 19. ♙c4 h6 20. ♞xf8+ ♞xf8 21. ♙xe6+
 ♜h8 22. b4



22... ♗e7?!

Correct was 22... ♚a6 23. ♙b3 with equal chances.

23. ♗f7+ ♜h7? 24. ♙f5+ ♜g8 25. ♗g6
 1-0

Povah-Hill, England 2003.

Variation B

5... exf3 6. ♗xf3



With ♘d3, 0-0 and a possible ♗h3 to follow, White is well placed to exploit the open lines on the kingside, whilst Black's lack of space makes it difficult for him to mobilise his queenside forces.

6... ♚c6

Here 6... ♙e7 7. ♘d3 ♚c6 8. c3 simply transposes, whilst attempts to disrupt White's planned development have failed as the following encounters have shown:

- 6... h6 7. ♗h3 ♘d6 (7... ♙e7 again transposes to the main line) 8. ♘d3 0-0 9. 0-0 ♗e8 (9... hxg5 10. ♙xg5 ♚c6 11. ♙xf6 ♞xf6 12. ♗h7+ ♜f8 13. ♚d2± as Black's lack of development means that White's attack is helped because he is effectively a rook up!) 10. ♚c3 ♚c6 11. ♞xf6 ♞xf6 12. ♗ge4 ♙e7 (12... ♞f8 13. ♚xd6 cxd6 14. ♚b5 ♗e7 15. ♗g3 ♗f6 16. ♙e3 ♚e7 17. ♞f1 ♚f5 18. ♙xf5 exf5 19. ♚xd6 with balanced chances) 13. ♚xf6+ ♙xf6 14. ♚b5 ♗f8 (14... ♗d8 15. ♙xh6! ♚xd4 16. ♗h5! ♚xb5 17. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 18. ♗h7+ ♜f8 19. ♞f1+-) 15. c3 e5?! 16. ♗f5 exd4 17. ♙xh6 d6 18. ♗h7+ ♜f7 19. ♙c4+ ♙e6 20. ♙xe6+ ♜xe6 21. ♚xc7+ and White won quickly in Povah-D. Shaw, British Team Championship 2001/02.

- 6... c5?! 7. ♘d3 ♗e7 (7... ♚c6 8. ♙xh7 ♞xh7 9. ♚xh7 ♚xd4 10. ♗d3±) 8. 0-0 ♚c6 9. ♙xh7! ♚xd4 (9... ♞xh7 10. ♚xh7 ♚xh7 - 10... ♚xd4 11. ♗d3± - 11. ♗h5+ g6 12. ♗xg6+ ♚d8 13. ♞f7 ♗h4 14. ♚c3+-, or 9... ♚xh7 10. ♗h5+ ♚d8 11. ♚f7+-) 10. ♙g6+ ♚d8 11. ♗d3 ♜c7 12. ♚f7 ♞h4?? (this blunders the rook, but 12... ♞g8 13. ♙f4+ ♜b6 14. ♚d6 should also win) 13. ♗g3+ d6 14. ♗xh4 1-0 Povah-Walton, British Team Championship 2004/05.

7.c3

White has also tried 7. ♙e3 ♗e7 8. ♚c3 d6 9. ♙b5 ♘d7 10. 0-0-0-0 11. ♞ae1 h6 12. ♚h3 ♗f7 13. ♚f4 ♙e7 14. d5 ♚e5 15. ♙xd7+ ♞xd7 16. ♗h3 exd5 17. ♚fxd5 ♜b8 18. ♙xa7+! ♜xa7 19. ♚b5+ ♜b8 20. ♗a3 ♞dd8 21. ♚bxc7 ♗xd5 22. ♚xd5 ♚xd5 23. ♗b3 when Black's weak pawns and lack of co-ordination gives White at least equality. Kohout-Gdovin, Czech ch 1996.

7...♙e7

Practice has also seen:

– 7...d5?! proved to be too slow, allowing White to breakthrough before Black could get his king to safety: 8.♙d3 ♙e7 9.♙xh7 ♚xb7 10.♙xh7 e5 11.♙xf6+ ♙xf6 12.♚h5+ ♙e7 13.0-0 e4 14.♙g5+ – San Emeterio Cabanes-Martinez Martin, Spanish U20 Ch 2001.

– 7...h6 8.♙d3?! (8.♚h3! transposing to either the main line or Povah-Shaw, depending on whether Black continues with ...♙e7 or ...♙d6, was more prudent) 8...hxg5 9.♙g6+ ♙e7 10.♙xg5 d5 11.0-0 ♙d7 12.♙d2 ♙d6 13.h3 ♙e7 14.♙d3 c6 when White did not have enough compensation for the piece. Cebalo-Naumkin, Forli Open 1995.

– 7...b6 (trying to develop the queenside, possibly with the hope of ...♚e7 and ...0-0 is also too slow) 8.♙d3 ♙b7 9.♚h3! ♙d6 (9...♙e7 trying to prevent ♙g6+, leaves Black congested after the natural 10.0-0, rather than the messy 10.♙xh7!?) ♙xh7 11.♚h5+ g6 12.♙xg6+ ♙xg6 13.♚xg6+ ♙e7 14.♙g5+ ♙xg5 15.♚xg5+ ♙e8 16.♚g6+ with perpetual) 10.♙g6+ ♙f8 11.0-0 ♙c7 12.♙xh7+ ♚xh7 13.♚xh7 ♙xg6 14.♚xg6 ♚e7 15.♙h6 ♙g8 16.♙xg7 ♚xg7 17.♚xf6 and wins.

8.♙d3 0-0 9.♚h3



White can also play 9.0-0 h6 when 10.♙h3 is similar to Hansen-Trabolt (see Variation D), although the bishop is better placed on e7 than d6, as Black can continue with ...d5 and ...e5.

9...h6 10.♙g6

White can also play 10.0-0 but then Black has 10...hxg5 11.♙g6 (11.♙xg5 d5 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.♚h5 ♙xd4+! 14.cxd4 ♚xf1+–) 11...g4 12.♚h4 ♚f7 13.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 14.♚xg4 ♙g8 when his chances are somewhat preferable.

10...e5!

Not 10...hxg5? 11.♙xg5+– when the threat of capturing on f6 and following up with ♚h7+ and ♚h8+ is difficult to meet, so Black has to concede material with 11...♚f7 12.0-0 d5 13.♙d2 when White has compensation.

11.0-0 exd4 12.cxd4 ♙xd4?!

Missing the stronger 12...d5! when White's attack has been repelled and he will lose further material.

13.♙c3 d5 14.♚d3 hxg6

14...♙c6 makes it more difficult for White to justify his two pawn deficit.

15.♚xd4 g4 16.♙g5 c6 17.♚f2



17...♙d7??

A terrible blunder: 17...♙d6 18.♚h4 ♚c7 guarding h7 along the second rank after exchanges on f6 was safer, although Black

would still need to be careful after 19.♖ae1 g3 20.♗xf6 gxf6 21.♞xf6 ♞xf6 22.♝xf6 ♗g4 23.♞g5± or 22...♗h3 23.gxh3 ♞f8 24.♞e8±.

18.♗f7+ ♞xf7 19.♝xf7+ ♖h7 20.♗xe7 ♝b6+ 21.♖h1 1-0

Netusil-Vavruska, Czech ch 1993.

Variation C

5...e3



Black attempts to slow down White's attacking possibilities by declining the capture on f3, thus leaving the f-file and the d1-h5 diagonal closed.

6.♗xe3

The natural response, but it is also possible to 'play around the e3 pawn' with 6.♗d3!? ♗e7 (6...♗d5!? Fritz 7.♗xh7 ♗b4+ 8.c3 ♞xh7 9.♗g6+ ♖f8 10.♗xh7 ♝h4+ 11.g3 ♝xh7 12.cxb4 ♖xb4 13.0-0 ♖c2 14.♗a3 ♖xa1 15.♗xe3±) 7.c3!? (preparing an assault on h7. 7.f4 0-0 8.0-0 c5 9.♗xe3 ♝c7 was equal in Niemela-Rajcsanyi, Helsinki 1992) 7...c5?! (missing White's crude threat. 7...♗d5!? is again a possibility, demanding accurate play: 8.♗xh7 ♖f7! 9.f4! ♖g8 10.0-0 ♞xh7 11.♗xh7+ ♖xh7 12.c4 ♖f6 13.♗xe3 with an unclear position; or 7...0-0!? 8.♝c2 h6 9.♗h7 ♖xh7 10.♗xh7+ ♖h8 11.♗xe3 ♗g5 equal) 8.♝c2 d6? (8...cxd4 is the consistent sequel to Black's

last move: 9.♗g6+ ♖f8 10.♗f7 ♝a5 11.♗xh8 ♖g8 with an unclear position) 9.dxc5 dxc5 10.♗xh7 ♖xh7 11.♝g6+ ♖d7 12.♖xh7 ♝e8?! 13.♝xg7 ♖c6 14.♗f6 ♝d8 15.♗g4 ♖d7 16.♗xe3 and White was winning in Povah-Naylor, British Team Championship 2005/06.

6...♗e7

The logical continuation. Black continues his development and threatens ...♗d5 embarrassing the knight on g5. The alternatives have not worked out well for Black.

- 6...b6 7.♗d3 ♝e7 8.c3 ♗b7 9.♝c2 ♖d5 10.♗d2 g6 11.♗xg6+ hxg6 12.♝xg6+ ♖d8 13.♗f7+ ♖c8 14.♗g5 1-0 Duong Thanh Nha-Delisle, Quebec 1990.

- 6...♗d5?! (this simply loses time) 7.♗d2 ♗e7 8.f4! (supporting the knight and opening the d1-h5 diagonal) 8...♗f6 9.♗d3 0-0 10.♗c3 d5 11.♝e2 ♖c6 12.♗xe6 ♗xc6 13.♝xc6+ ♖h8 14.0-0-0 ♖xd4 15.♝h3 c5 16.♗e3 ♖c6 17.g4± with a clear kingside initiative, San Emeterio Cabanes-Serrano Nunez, San Sebastian 2000.

- 6...c5 7.♗c3 cxd4 8.♝xd4 ♖c6 9.♝h4 ♖b4 10.0-0-0 ♝a5 11.♗c4 ♗c5 12.♗xc5 ♝xc5 13.♞he1 0-0 14.a3 ♖c6 15.b4! (15.♗d5!?) 15...♝b6 16.♗d5! exd5 17.♞xd5 h6 18.♞d6+ 1-0 as White forces mate after 18...♖h8 19.♞xf6. Bellon-Lopez-Garcia Fernandez, Spanish Championship 1991.

7.♖c3



7.♗c1, as played in Bozinovic-B.Kovacevic, Zadar 1998, seems rather retrograde and Black continued 7...♗c6 8.♗d3 ♗b4 9.♗e2 c5 10.c3 ♗c6 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 with easy equality.

7...0-0

Not 7...d5?! 8.f4 (fixing the weak pawn at e6) 8...0-0 9.♖d2 a6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.g3± Karner-Raffalt, Graz 2001.

Black can also establish easy equality with 7...♗g4 8.fxg4 ♗xg5.

8.h4

Perhaps simply 8.♗d3!?

8...h6 9.♖d3 ♗c6 10.a3 d5 11.f4 ♗d6 12.g3 ♗e7

Play was equal in Witek-Strzemiecki, European Championship U12, Herceg Novi 2005.

Variation D

5...h6



This attempt to drive the knight away creates serious weaknesses on the light squares, which White can exploit with ♗h3-f4-g6, or a timely invasion on g6 or h5 by White's bishop or queen. Nevertheless, this was Smyslov's choice when faced with the Deferred Staunton Gambit.

6.♗h3

Of course, not 6.♗xe4? ♗xe4 7.fx4 ♖h4+ 8.♗d2 ♖xe4 9.♗d3 ♖xg2+ 10.♗c3 ♗c6 11.a3 ♖d5 with a clear advantage in Barnstedt-Scholten, Baden 1997.

6...d5

An interesting try is 6...exf3 with some parallels to the 5...exf3 line, as the following game illustrates: 7.♖xf3 ♗d6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.c3 ♗e7 11.♗d2 ♖b8 12.♗c4 b6 13.♗xd6 cxd6 14.♖g3± as White regains the pawn with the advantage of the two bishops and kingside attacking prospects, K.Hansen-Trabolt, Logumkloster, Danish U20 Championship 1994.

But neither 6...e3 7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.♗g6+ ♗f8 9.♗xe3, nor 6...♗b4+ 7.c3 ♗a5 8.fx4 make much sense for Black.

7.fx4 dxe4

7...♗xc4 8.♖h5+ ♗d7 9.♗d3 is unclear, although it doesn't look very appealing for Black.

8.♗e2

With a crude threat of invading on h5 which is difficult to prevent without making further concessions.

8...♗d6 9.♗h5+ ♗e7

Or 9...♗d7 10.♗c3 b6 11.♗g6 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♖f8 Hill-Arnott, British Team Championship 2002, when 13.♗f2 ♖e7 14.a3 ♗a6 15.♖e1 would enable White to regain his pawn with at least equality.

10.0-0 ♗c6 11.♗c3 ♗xd4



12.♗xe4! ♗f5 13.♖e2 ♗xe4

13...♗d4 14.♖f2 ♖f8 15.♗xd6 ♖xd6 16.♗f4 with dangerous threats for the pawn.

14. ♖xe4 ♙c5+ 15. ♗h1 ♜d5 16. ♗e1! ♙d6 17. ♘f4 ♙xf4 18. ♙xf4 ♜f8 19. ♙xc7

Material is equal again, and Black's position is a horrible mess.

19... ♗a5 20. ♗c3 ♜a6 21. ♗a3+ ♘d6 22. ♜fd1 ♗e5 23. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 24. ♜d1

And Black resigned in Gretarsson-Smyslov, Reykjavik 1995.

Variation E

5...d5



This move has limited independent value as it will usually transpose to Variation D after 6.fxe4 h6 7. ♘h3.

6.fxe4

This is the natural response, but White can also try 6. ♘c3 (sometimes reached by 5. ♘c3 d5 6.f3) when Black can continue with 6... ♘c6 7. ♙b5 (7.fxe4 ♘xe4 8. ♘gxe4 dxe4 9. ♙e3 ♙e7 10. ♘xe4 ♗d5 11. ♙d3 0-0 Zweschper-Blum, Hofbieber 1996, when 12. ♘g3 with equal chances appears to be the best way for White to proceed) 7...h6 8. ♘h3

g5 9.fxe4 dxe4 10.0-0 ♙g7 11. ♘xe4 0-0 12. ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 13.c3 with a clear advantage, Bartlett-Ramakrishna, Canberra 2004.

6...dxe4

Here 6... ♘xe4 7. ♘xe4 dxe4 8. ♗h5+ g6 9. ♗e5 is clearly good for White. Alternatively, 6...h6 7. ♘h3 transposes to Variation D as already mentioned, unless White wants to try the independent 7.e5, but after 7...hxg5 8. ♙xg5 ♙e7 9.exf6 ♙xf6 it seems that the best White can hope for is equality with 10. ♙xf6 ♗xf6 11.c3 ♗h4+ 12.g3 ♗e4+ 13. ♘d2 0-0 14. ♙h3.

7. ♙c4

When White should be better due to Black's weak c-pawns.

7...c5

This is insufficient, but 7... ♘d5?! 8.0-0 ♗e7 9. ♘xe4 ♘c6 10. ♙g5 and 7... ♗d6 8. ♘c3 both favour White.

8.dxc5 ♗xd1+ 9. ♘xd1 ♙xc5 10. ♙xe6

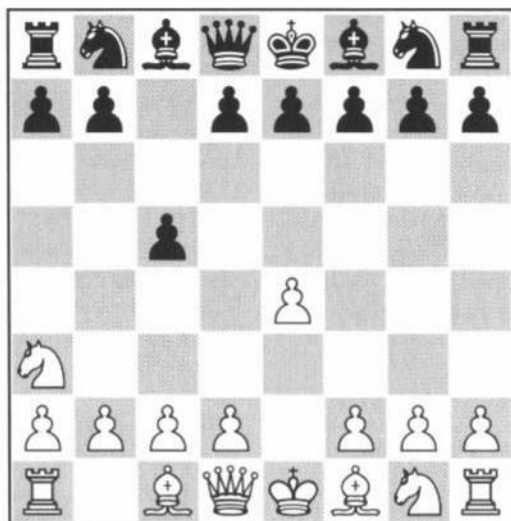


when White has the better ending due to the weak e4 pawn.

CHAPTER 4

Jeroen Bosch

Zviagintsev's Sicilian Surprise



1.e4 c5 2.♞a3

In the Russian Super-Final, Vadim Zviagintsev ventured the amazing 2.♞a3 against the Sicilian. His opponent, ex-FIDE World Champion Alexander Khalifman, reportedly burst out laughing, shaking his head in disbelief. One can imagine that Mikhail Botvinnik would have taken a less lenient attitude. A move like 2.♞a3 looks like a complete joke, an insult to a serious professional chess player – a personal insult perhaps. If we go back in history, only the 12th World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, suffered worse when a cheeky Tony Miles uncorked 1...a6 against him (and won). Zviagintsev, however, had no intention to insult, and he certainly wasn't joking either.

Indeed, his knight-to-the-edge move was not meant as just a one-off surprise either. Zviagintsev obviously thinks highly of 2.♞a3, as he repeated the move against Dreev and Motylev in the same championship. His final score was a respectable 2 out of 3. Moreover, as Zviagintsev said: 'I would not know why 2.♞a3 is worse than 2.c3'!

- ♞ Vadim Zviagintsev
 - ♣ Alexander Khalifman
- Moscow ch-RUS 2005 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♞a3!?

Moving the knight to the edge and opening

up a whole new realm of possibilities. Black can react in numerous ways, and it will be very exciting to watch how Zviagintsev's line will develop. What are the main ideas of this move? The knight will often go to c2 after a future c3 – thus supporting the advance d2-d4. Does this mean that Zviagintsev wants to play a type of 2.c3 Sicilian? Well, not necessarily. In case of 2...c6 he plays 3.b5, going for a Rossolimo where White still has the option of playing f4 (there is no knight on f3) – see Zviagintsev-Motylev below. So with 2.a3 Zviagintsev keeps the option of playing Alapin or Rossolimo positions, as well as a whole new vista of play, of course. Note that White will never transpose to an open Sicilian, since the knight will always be badly placed on a3.

2...c6

A natural move, and one out of several sound replies.

It is intriguing to speculate on what Zviagintsev had in mind against 2...d6 – if 3.b5+ then simply 3...d7. Perhaps 3.f3 f6 4.b5+ d7 5.e2 is not a bad set-up with a knight already on a3?

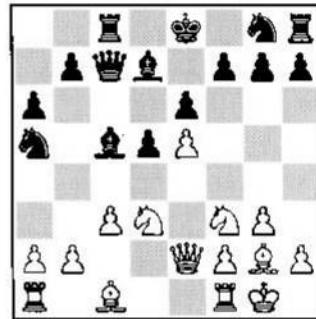
Both 2...g6 and 2...b6 come into consideration. The knight has no immediate function in these fianchetto lines.

2...d5 is an important reply against 2.c3 – here it is less strong. 3.exd5 ♖xd5 (not 3...f6 4.b5+ d7 5.c4, and White is superior) 4.f3, and with f5 and e4 in the air as tempo-gainers White has a decent future ahead of him.

The other main line against 2.c3 is 2...f6. Just like 2...d5 this is playable, but it certainly doesn't question the right of 2.a3 to exist. After 3.e5 d5 you might like to investigate 4.f3 (or 4.d4 cxd4 5.♗xd4 e6) 4...c6 5.b5.

Dreev went for 2...e6, when the game transposed into a French type of position after 3.c3 d5 4.e5 c6 5.f3 (Ljubojevic has

played in this way via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.f3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.e5 c6 5.a3. See SOS-4, Chapter 10, which concentrates on 4...d4 5.cxd4 cxd4 6.b5+) 5...d7 6.g3 (this is Zviagintsev's move. Ljubojevic went 6.c2, and after 6...f6 7.d4 fxe5 8.dxe5 ♗c7 9.b4 chances were about even in Ljubojevic-Ribli, Belfort 1988) 6...a6 (6...f6!?) 7.c2 ♞c8 8.g2 ♗c7 9.♞e2 c4 (otherwise White plays d4 and takes back with the c2 knight in case of ...cxd4) 10.0-0 c5 11.ccl! a5 12.d4 cxd3 13.cxd3



and White is slightly better due to his central control, Zviagintsev-Dreev, Moscow 2005 (Round 7).

3.b5

This is the 'natural' option now. In a Rossolimo-like position it can be favourable that the knight is on a3 (c3 and d4 is still possible, b5 is protected). Moreover, White has the option of playing f4 before sending his second knight to its conventional square (when will we see the first games with 2.h3?). By the way, Zviagintsev's example was followed in the Georgian women's championship. Play was about equal after 3.f3 g6 4.c3 g7 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 d6 7.h3 f6 8.d3 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.e3 b5 11.c2 a5 12.d5 e6 13.dxe6 ex6 in Batsiashvili-Dzagnidze, Tbilisi 2006.

3...♖c7

Khalifman puts his queen on a natural Sicilian square and aims to take back on c6 after a subsequent exchange. But this is costing time, and White's knights are fairly comfortable in the resulting positions.

Motylev preferred 3...g6 4.♗xc6 (this exchange is not obligatory. In a later game Zviagintsev improved his play with the flexible 4.c3 ♗g7 5.d3 ♖f6 6.f4. See the next game in this chapter: Zviagintsev-Ponomarev, Sochi 2006) 4...bxc6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.f4!? ('exploiting' the fact that this is not a Rossolimo proper) 6...d5 7.e5 (it would be nice to play 7.♖e2 first – strategically it is better to keep the pawns on e4 and f4. However, there is a tactical problem – the knight on a3 – after 7...♖a5+ 8.♗d2 ♖b6 9.♖b1, and now 9...♗xb2. This looks scary, but if necessary Black can always give up his b2 bishop for the a3 knight – with a future ...♖a6) 7...f6 8.♖e2 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♗h6 10.♗f3 ♗g4 11.0-0 0-0 12.c3 ♖c7 13.♗c2 ♗f5



and here Black's position was better in Zviagintsev-Motylev, Moscow 2005 (9).

Not so good as it may seem is 3...♗d4. Play might continue 4.♗f3 ♗xb5 5.♗xb5 (this normally arises via the move order 1.e4 c5 2.♗c3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 ♗d4 4.♗f3 ♗xb5 5.♗xb5).



This type of position is dangerous for Black, as witness Van der Wiel-Spoelman, Hoogeveen 2005: 5...♗f6 6.e5 ♗d5 7.♗g5!? (very tricky – in practice Black usually goes for this position via 1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♗h5 ♗d4 5.e5 ♗xb5 6.♗xb5 ♗d5 7.♗g5 – both 7.c4 and 7.0-0 are decent too. Am I confusing you with all these transpositions? Zviagintsev must have thought out such things in the comfort of his study) 7...f6 (7...f5 is the other option. Bad is 7...h6? 8.♗xf7 ♗xf7 9.♖f3+ ♗f6 10.exf6 exf6 11.♖d5+ ♗g6 12.0-0, which was much better for White in Graf-Gisbrecht, German Championship 2002) 8.♖f3 (8.♖h5+ g6 9.♖f3 is more common) 8...♗b4 9.exf6 exf6 10.♖h5+ g6 11.♖e2+ ♖e7 12.♗d6+ ♗d8 13.♗gf7+ ♗c7 14.♖xe7 ♗xe7 15.♗xh8 ♗xd6 16.♗d1, and White won.

Decent alternatives are 3...e6, 3...d6 and 3...♗f6.

4.♗f3 g6

Here 4...a6 5.♗xc6 ♖xc6 is risky, but perhaps more in keeping with his third move.

5.c3

Preparing d4 and the manoeuvre ♗a3-c2-(e3). Good is also 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.♖c1 (Sakaev).

5...a6

Khalifman questions the bishop. In reply to 5...♗g7 there follows 6.d4, when at some point 3...♖c7 may prove to have been a total waste of time.

6. ♖xc6 ♜xc6 7.0-0



7... ♗g7

Here 7... ♜xe4?! 8.d4 gives White a very dangerous lead in development.

8.d4 d6 9.d5

White gains space and aims for a Benoni type of position. 9. ♖e1 ♗g4 10.d5 also gives White a slight plus.

9... ♜c7 10.h3

This prevents ... ♗g4 (xf3) and thus preserves control over the important e5 square. The c8 bishop is a problem piece – Black would be quite happy to part with his bishop pair. Worthy of consideration is Shipov's 10. ♗f4, preventing 10... ♗f6, because of 11.e5!.

10... ♗f6 11. ♗f4 0-0

Not 11... ♗xe4?? 12. ♜a4+.

12. ♖e1 b5 13. ♜d2

It is too early for 13.e5. After 13... ♗d7 14. ♜e2 ♗b7 15. ♖ad1 (or 15.exd6 exd6 16.c4 bxc4 17. ♗xc4 ♗xd5 18. ♗xd6 ♗xc4 19. ♗xc7 ♗xe2 20. ♖xe2 with equal chances) Black can liquidate with 15... dxe5 16. ♗xc5 ♗xe5 17. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 18. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 19. ♖xe5 ♖fd8.

13... ♗b7

Black connects his rooks. The bishop is not too active, but still of some use. On b7 the bishop attacks d5, thus preventing e4-e5 for the moment.

14. ♖ad1 ♖fe8

Both sides have developed nearly all their

pieces. Zviagintsev can be satisfied with his 2. ♗a3 set-up. White is slightly better due to his space advantage.



15.c4

Trying to improve his knight in case of 15... bxc4?! 16. ♗xc4, and 15... b4 16. ♗c2. With the pawn on c4, d5 is protected, which means that e4-e5 will become a threat.

15... ♜b6 16. ♗h6 ♗h8 17.b3

Now that White has formed a chain (a2-b3-c4-d5) the positional threat of e4-e5 becomes real. Khalifman acts accordingly.

17... e6! 18. ♗g5

White should not free the light-squared bishop. After 18.dxe6 ♖xe6 the weakness of e4 gives Black good play.

18... exd5 19. cxd5



19. exd5 is playable, but with his knight on

a3 White cannot count on anything special.

19...♖e7

Both sides will double their rooks on the only (half-)open file.

20.♗e3 ♜ae8 21.♗de1 a5!

Black must find a useful square for his light-squared bishop.

22.♞b1

Likewise, Zviagintsev has to find a comfortable spot for his audacious knight (it is now completely out of play on a3).

22...b4 23.♜c2 ♞d7 24.♞d2



24...♗a6

Following his plan of placing the bishop more actively on the a6-f1 diagonal. But 24...♗d4 would have been even better, when Black is, to say the least, not worse.

25.♞g3 ♗e5

Khalifman is on a 'down-trend' to use a term of Yermolinsky's. The move in the game keeps equal chances, but makes things much harder for Black. It was not too late for the active 25...♗d4!?, which gives Black good counterplay after 26.♞xd4 cxd4.

26.♗g5 ♞xf3+ 27.♞xf3

Exchanging a pair of knights favours White.

27...♗d7 28.e5!?

A principled decision, which brings the game to a crisis. The resulting position is extremely difficult to play, especially in time-trouble.

28...dxe5 29.♞xe5



29...♗xd5

Here 29...♗xe5 30.♗xe5 ♗xe5 31.♗xe5 f6 32.♗e6 should win for White.

30.♞xf7!

This sacrifice was the point of 28.e5.

30...♗xe3 31.♗xe3

As Bücker has noted White can win here with 31.♞h6+ ♜f8 32.♗xe3 ♗b7, and now 32.♜c2!, and after a long and complicated line your computer will demonstrate a win.

31...♜xf7 32.♗e7+ ♜f8 33.♜e4



33...♗d1+?

This logical check (probably in time-trouble) loses the game. Khalifman should have changed the move order with 33...♜d6!, threatening 34...♗d1 mate, when Black can apparently hold the position by playing 34.♗h6+ (34.♜f3+ ♗f6 35.♜xf6+ ♜xf6

36. ♖xf6) 34... ♗g7! (not 34... ♗g8? when 35. ♖e8+ ♗f7 36. ♖f8+ wins the house) 35. ♗xg7+ (a blunder is 35. ♖xg7?? ♖d1+) 35... ♗g8 36. f4 ♗b5, defending the e8-square and coming back to the long diagonal.

34. ♗h2 ♖d6+ 35. f4 ♗f6

After the unfortunate check on d1 35... ♗b5 can no longer save Black; after 36. ♗h6+ ♗g8 (if 36... ♗g7 37. ♖xg7 decides) White's queen has access to the seventh rank: 37. ♖b7, and Black has no defence.

If 35... h5 then 36. ♖e6 and 37. ♖xg6 decides.

36. ♗h6+ ♗g8 37. ♖a8+

and Khalifman resigned, as 37... ♖d8 38. ♖e8+ is game over.

During the Russian Team Championship in Sochi, Vadim Zviagintsev repeated his brainchild against Ruslan Ponomarev. Employing a flexible set-up, Zviagintsev improved upon his earlier game against Motylev to gain a significant opening edge. He eventually ground down Ponomarev in a difficult ending. After Sochi a strong round-robin tournament took place in Sarajevo. Impressed by the results of his countryman, Vladimir Malakhov twice employed 2. ♗a3. Excerpts of these games are cited in the notes to our next game.

□ Vadim Zviagintsev

■ Ruslan Ponomarev

Sochi 2006

1. e4 c5 2. ♗a3 ♗c6

Interestingly, most players play 2... ♗c6 against Zviagintsev (only Dreev played 2... e6) whereas here, after 3. ♗b5, it is clear that 2. ♗a3 serves some purpose.

In Sarajevo Malakhov was 'less lucky':

– 2... d6 3. c3 ♗f6 4. g3 g6 (4... ♗xe4? 5. ♖a4+) 5. ♗g2 ♗g7 6. ♗e2 0-0 7. 0-0 e5

8. d4 exd4 9. cxd4 ♗c6 10. d5 ♗b4 11. ♗c2 with a slight edge in Malakhov-Nisipeanu, Sarajevo 2006.

– 2... a6 3. c3 ♗c6 4. ♗f3 ♗f6 5. ♖e2 (White has a favourable 2. c3 Sicilian after 5. e5 ♗d5 – White's second move is more useful than Black's. While after 5... ♗g4 there is 6. ♖e2 d6 7. exd6 ♖xd6 8. ♗c4 ♖c7 9. a4 Barsky in *Chess Today*) 5... d6 6. g3 ♗g4?! 7. h3 ♗h5 8. ♗g2 e6 9. 0-0 ♗e7 10. d3 ♗d7 11. ♗c2 ♖c8 12. g4 ♗g6 13. ♗d2 e5 14. ♗e3 and White is slightly better, Malakhov-Sasikiran, Sarajevo 2006.

3. ♗b5 g6

The fianchetto is stronger than Khalifman's 3... ♖c7. This was also Motylev's choice in the Russian Superfinal. Zviagintsev avoids the Rossolimo-like set-up that he chose in that game.

4. c3

So here is the big improvement! 4. ♗xc6 bxc6 5. d3 ♗g7 6. f4 was Zviagintsev-Motylev, Moscow 2005. Note how White opted for a set-up with f4 here: taking advantage of the fact that there is no knight on f3 yet.

4... ♗g7 5. d3

This looks modest, but White's moves should be judged as a whole. After his game against Motylev, Zviagintsev must have found the development scheme 4. c3, 5. d3, 6. f4, 7. ♗f3 and 8. 0-0. White may not be better in the traditional sense, but he has a flexible position and a clear plan (play on the kingside). Black, on the other hand, rather unusually for a Sicilian, is confronted with fresh problems from an extremely early phase in the game. Note that 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♖e2 0-0 7. 0-0 a6 8. ♗xc6 dxc6 9. d4 cxd4 10. cxd4 ♖c7 11. ♗c4 ♗g4 12. ♗ce5 ♗xf3 13. ♗xf3 ♖ad8 was played in Laesson-Rogule, Tallin 2006. White is a tad better at this point.

5... ♗f6 6. f4 0-0 7. ♗f3



7...d6

Following in Zviagintsev's footsteps, young master B.Savchenko played the same set-up a few days later. His opponent decided to deviate here with the original 7...c5. After 8.0-0 a6 9.♗a4 b5 10.♙c2 d6 11.♚e1 ♜b8 12.♞h4 (Savchenko has copied Zviagintsev's plan, but Belov is faster on the queenside than Ponomariov was in the main game) 12...b4! 13.♙c4?! bxc3 14.bxc3 ♘xc4 15.dxc4 ♗a5 16.♚e1 (this retreat is necessary, Belov now opts for a dangerous knight manoeuvre: ♘d7-b6. This serves to attack White's weakened queenside, but withdraws a defender) 16...♘d7 17.e5 ♘b6 18.♞b1 ♙g4 19.♙g5!?! (planning 20.♞h4, and going all-out for the attack) 19...h6



20.♙xf7 ♞xf7 (20...♗xf7! 21.f5 with huge complications) 21.♙xg6 ♗xa2 22.exd6

exd6 23.f5 (stronger than taking on f7 – White cuts off the g4-bishop, and advances another attacker. 23.♞h4!?) 23...♞f6?! (this stops the f-pawn, but misses or underestimates Savchenko's next. White is better after 23...♗xb1 24.♙xf7+ ♗xf7 25.f6 or 24...♗xf7 25.♞g3) 24.♞b2 ♗a5 (24...♗xc4? 25.♞f4) 25.h3 (regaining his sacrificed material, whilst keeping the attack) 25...♞bf8? (25...♙xf5 26.♙xf5 ♗h8) 26.hxg4 ♘xc4 27.♞b7 (White is completely winning now) 27...♙c5 28.g5 (winning an exchange – sacrificing one leads to an immediate win: 28.♞xg7+! ♗xg7 29.♙xh6+) 28...hxg5 29.♙xg5 ♘xg6? 30.♙xf6 ♞xf6 31.fxg6 ♞xg6 32.♞h4 ♙h6 33.♞f8+! 1–0 B.Savchenko-Belov, Sochi 2006.

8.0-0 ♙d7 9.♚e1 e6 10.♞h4

White has played naturally, his position is somewhat easier to play. Ponomariov now offers to exchange queens – possibly he did not expect Zviagintsev to acquiesce.

10...c5

Perhaps 10...♙e8!?



11.g4!

Black is fine after 11.♞h3 f5 12.exf5 ♞xf5!.

11...♗xh4 12.♙xh4 ♙f6

This leads to an advantage for White, stronger was simply 12...♙f6.

13.♙xg6! hxg6 14.gxh5 gxh5

The pawn on h5 is weak, a fact which Zviagintsev's accentuates over his next few moves.

15. ♖a4 d5?!

Stronger is Bücker's suggestion of 15... ♖h7.

16. ♗d1 c4

Trying to mix it up, White is comfortable after 16...h4 17. ♗f3.

17. e5 ♗e7 18. dxc4 d4

No fun is 18... ♗xa3 19. bxa3 dxc4 20. ♗xh5 ♗e7 21. ♗e3.

19. ♗c2

Black has some counterplay after 19. cxd4 ♗xd4.

19... dxc3 20. bxc3 ♗a5 21. ♗a3

A timely exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

21... ♗xa3 22. ♗xa3 ♗ac8 23. ♗e2

Hanging on to his extra pawn, while keeping the weak h-pawn on the board.

23... f6

White was ready for the king march ♖f2-e3 with a huge endgame advantage.

24. ♗ad1 ♗e8 25. f5

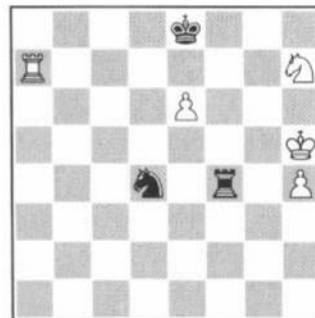


25... fxe5

Or 25... exf5 26. ♗xf5 fxe5 27. ♗xe5 b6 and suddenly Black's king is in danger: 28. ♗g5+ ♖h7 (28... ♖h8 29. ♗d6 ♗c6 30. ♗b5) 29. ♗d6 ♗c6 30. ♗d3+ ♖h8 31. ♗b5.

26. fxe6 ♗xf1+ 27. ♗xf1 ♖g7 28. ♗f3 b5!? Tenacious defence by Ponomariov,

more pawns are exchanged. **29. cxb5** White has a complicated win here with 29. ♗xd5! ♗xc4 30. ♗b7!. **29... ♗xc3 30. ♗b1 ♗c5 31. ♗e2 e4 32. ♖f2 32.a4** e3 gives counterplay. **32... e3+ 32... ♗xb5. 33. ♖xe3 ♗e5+ 34. ♖f3 ♗xb5 35. ♗xb5 ♗xb5 36. ♗e1!** White is a healthy passed pawn up, but since there is so little material on the board the win is not 'just a matter of technique'. **36... ♗f5+ 37. ♖g3 ♖f8 38. ♗d2 ♖e7 39. ♗f3 ♗d5 39... ♗c6. 40. ♖h4 ♗c4 41. ♗g5 ♗d2 42. ♗c1! ♗d6 42... ♗xh2+? 43. ♖g3. 43.h3 ♗e8** Stronger than 43... ♗xa2 44. ♗c7+ ♖e8 45. ♖xh5. **44. ♖xh5 ♗xa2 45. ♖g6 ♗a4 46. ♗b1 ♗d6 47. ♗b8 ♗f4 48. ♗a8 ♗f6+ 49. ♖h5 ♗b5 50. h4 ♗f4 51. ♗h8 ♗d6?** Bücker has rightly indicated that Black can draw here with the stalemate trap 51... ♗d4 52. ♗h7+ ♖e8 53. ♗xa7 ♗xe6. **52. ♗h7+ ♖e8 53. ♗xa7 ♗f5 54. ♗h7 ♗d4**



55. ♖g6! There was a neat stalemate trap here: 55. ♗g5? ♗xe6! 56. ♗xe6 ♗xh4+!. **55... ♗xe6?** More tenacious was 55... ♗g4+! 56. ♖f6 ♗xe6! when White must find the study-like 57. h5! ♗f4 58. ♖f5! ♗h4 59. ♗f6+ ♖d8 (59... ♖f8 60. ♖g5 wins as well) 60. ♗d7+ ♖c8 61. ♗d4! ♗xh5+ 62. ♗xh5 ♗xh5 63. ♗g4 trapping the knight. **56. ♗f6+ ♖d8 57. ♗a8+ ♖c7 58. ♗d5+ 1-0**

CHAPTER 5

Igor Glek

English Opening: Chebanenko's 3...h6



1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 h6!?

1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 h6

This is one of the many opening ideas of the creative Moldovan coach Vecheslav Chebanenko (who unfortunately died too early) – among his pupils are such well-known GM's as Viktor Gavrikov, Dorian Rogozenko and Viorel Bologan.

The move 3...h6 may look a bit strange, but generally it is quite useful in the English Opening:

1. After a future Bg1-f3 Black can play e5-e4, when White does not have f3-g5.
2. In some lines White cannot play Bc1-g5.
3. Finally, Black is asking: 'What are you going to do?'. For, in the case of the natural 4.Qc3, Black is moving the game into the

territory of the Rossolimo Variation in the Sicilian. Well, admittedly, with colours reversed and some 1.5 tempo down – but in practice it's very difficult for White to prove an advantage!

This line became popular after my game against M.Gurevich (Vlissingen 2002) and has in the meantime been played by GMs like Anand, Volokitin, Morozevich and Bologan.

It is interesting to note that in the Sicilian White sometimes uses similar waiting tactics, hoping to provoke Qc6. For example:

- 1.e4 c5 2.Qf3 g6 3.c3 Qg7 4.h3!?! (Glek-B.Savchenko, Moscow ch 2005).
- 1.e4 c5 2.Qa3!?! (Zviagintsev-Khalifman, Moscow ch-RUS 2005).

In my opinion, after 1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♟f6 3.♗g2 h6, there are two principal approaches:

I. 4.♟c3 ♗b4, simply allowing the 'Rossolimo' (and hoping to make use of the extra time), and

II. all other moves – 4.b3, 4.a3, 4.♟f3, 4.e4, 4.d3 etc. – avoiding the 'Rossolimo'.

Let us look first at my game with Mikhail Gurevich – which I lost unnecessarily – and next I will present a small theoretical theoretical survey.

□ Mikhail Gurevich

■ Igor Glek

Vlissingen 2002

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♟f6 3.♗g2 h6

So here we are with Chebanenko's surprising waiting move. Gurevich decides to allow Black's main idea, but his subsequent follow-up with 5.e3 is harmless.

4.♟c3 ♗b4 5.e3?! ♗xc3 6.bxc3 0-0 7.♟e2 ♗e8



A useful move which prepares ...e4. No good was the immediate 7...e4?! because of 8.f3 exf3 9.♗xf3 ♟c6 10.d3 ♟e5 11.♗g2. Interesting is Gurevich's suggestion of 7...c6!?, planning 8.0-0 d5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗a3 ♗e8 11.d3 ♟c6 and Black is already slightly better. White should probably play

8.♗a3!? intending 8...♗e8 9.♗d6 ♗e6 10.c5 ♟e8 11.♗h3.

8.e4 c6 9.♗b3 b6

Also playable is 9...♗a6 10.0-0 ♟c5 11.♗c2 d5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♟xd5 14.d4 exd4 15.exd4 ♗a6 16.♗b3 ♟ac7.

10.0-0 ♗a6?!

This looks impressive, but now I would prefer the simple 10...♗b7 when I believe that Black is already better – not bad for an opening surprise! 11.c5 (11.d3 d5, and 11.♗d1 (Gurevich) is met by 11...d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.exd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♟xd5):

– 11...♗a6 12.cxb6 (12.♗a3 Gurevich 12...♟xc5! 13.♗xc5 ♗a6 14.♗d6!? ♗xe2 15.♗fe1 with compensation, planning 16.d4) 12...axb6 13.d3 d5, or 13...♟c5 14.♗c2 d5.

– 11...d5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.cxb6 axb6 14.d3 ♗a6 15.♗d1 e4 16.♟f4 g5 17.dxe4 gxf4 18.exd5 ♗e2 19.♗xf4!? (19.♗d4 is met by 19...f3) 19...♗xd1 20.♗xd1 ♟g7.

11.♗e1 d5 12.exd5

The idea was 12.cxd5 ♗d3.

12...cxd5

Deserving of attention is 12...♗b7 13.dxc6 ♟xc6 14.♗c2 e4 15.♟f4 ♟e5.

13.cxd5 ♗c8!?

Intending 14...♗c4 or 14...♗g4.

After 13...♟bd7!? White must choose between 14.♗a3 and 14.c4. Let's analyse:

● 14.♗a3

– 14...e4 (Gurevich) 15.♗a4 (15.♟d4 ♟e5 16.d6 ♗d7) 15...♗d3 16.♟f4 ♟e5 Black has compensation.

– 14...♗c8 15.♗a4 (15.d6 ♟c5 16.♗xc5 bxc5) 15...♗c4 (15...♗d3 16.♟c1) 16.d6 a5 17.♗c2 and Black is slightly better after both 17...b5 and 17...♟c5.

● 14.c4

– 14...e4 15.♟d4 ♟e5 16.d3 (16.♟b5 ♗c8) 16...♟xd3 17.♟c6 ♗c7 18.♗d1 ♟d7 19.♗a3 ♟7c5 20.♗c3 ♗b7 21.♟d4 ♗ad8.

– 14...♖c8 15.d3 e4 16.dxc4 (16.♟f4 exd3, or 16.♟d4 exd3) 16...♟xe4 17.♙b2 ♙xc4 18.♚d1 ♟df6 19.♟f4 ♟d6.

14.♚a4 ♟bd7 15.♙a3 ♙c4 16.d6 b5 17.♚c2 ♙d5!

Worse is 17...e4 18.♟f4 ♟e5 (18...g5 19.d3 gxf4 20.dxc4 ♚xc4 21.♙ad1 ♙ac8 22.♙c1±) 19.♙xe4 ♟xe4 20.♚xe4 ♚g4 21.♙c3±.

18.♙xd5 ♟xd5 19.♚f5 ♟7b6

Equal play arises after 19...♚c6!? 20.f4 (Here 20.♙ac1 is met by 20...♙ad8 intending 21...♚a6) 20...♚b6+ 21.d4 ♟xc3 22.♟xc3 ♚xd4+ 23.♟h1 ♚xc3 24.♚xd7 ♚f3+ 25.♟g1 ♚xa3.

20.♚xc8 ♙axc8

Black can also take back with the other rook: 20...♙ex8!? 21.d4 (21.d3 ♟xc3 22.♟xc3 ♙xc3 23.♙b4 ♙xd3 24.♙xe5 a6 equal) 21...♟c4 22.♙c5 exd4 23.cxd4 ♙d8 24.♙ac1 ♟xd6 25.♟c3 ♟xc3 26.♙xc3 ♟c4.

21.♙ac1 ♙ed8 22.d3 a5!

Or 22...♙d7 23.♙ed1 a6 24.♟g2 ♟f6.

23.♙b1 ♟xc3 24.♟xc3 ♙xc3 25.♙xb5 ♙xa3 26.♙xb6



26...♙xd3

In time trouble I did not find the easiest way to draw: 26...f6 27.d4 exd4 28.♙e7 d3 29.♙bb7 d2 30.♙xg7+ ♟h8.

27.♙xe5 ♙3xd6 28.♙xd6 ♙xd6 29.♙xa5

A well-known technical ending. Objectively it is a draw, but White has practical chances of course.

29...♙d2 30.♟g2

30.g4.

30...h5 31.a4 ♙a2 32.h4 g6 33.♙a8+ ♟g7 34.a5 ♙a3 35.a6 ♟f6 36.♟f1 ♙a2 37.♟g1 ♟f5 38.♟g2 ♙a3 39.♙a7 ♟f6

Correct was 39...f6!.

40.♟f1 ♙a2 41.♟e1 ♟g7?

Better is 41...♟e6 42.♟d1 ♙xf2 43.♙b7 ♙a2 44.a7 ♟f5 45.♙xf7+ ♟g4 46.♙g7 ♟xg3 47.♙xg6+ ♟xh4 48.♙g7 ♟h3.

42.♟d1

And White won in the end.

I. White allows the Rossolimo set-up

4.♟c3 ♙b4

What could be more logical than playing 4.♟c3? After 4...♙b4 there is no clear way for White to achieve anything out of the opening. We have already seen that 5.e3?! ♙xc3 6.bxc3 0-0 gives nothing special.

- A) 5.e4
- B) 5.♚c2
- C) 5.♚b3
- D) 5.♟f3
- E) 5.♟d5

Variation A

5.e4 ♙xc3

It is also possible to play 5...♟c6 6.♟ge2 ♙c5 7.0-0 a6 8.a3 d6 9.b4 ♙a7 10.h3 ♟d4 with about equal chances. Ceko-Jaracz, Belgium tt 2003/04.

6.bxc3

I believe that Black is also OK after 6.dxc3 just like in the Rossolimo Sicilian. For example, 6.dxc3 d6 7.♚e2 ♟c6 (7...♟bd7!?) 8.h3 ♙e6 9.♙e3 ♚c7 10.b3 a5 11.a4 ♟d7 12.♟f3 ♟c5 Chelushkina-Sheremetieva, Volshski 1989.

6...d6

I prefer 6...0-0 7.♘e2



● 7...♞e8 8.0-0 c6 9.♞b3 ♘a6 10.♙a3 b6 11.d3 (or 11.f4 d6 12.♞ae1 ♞b8 13.d4 c5 14.fxe5 dxe5 15.d5 ♞f8 16.♘c1 ♘e8 17.♞f2 ♘d6 Bode-Baklan, Nordheim 2005) 11...d6 12.♞ad1 ♞c7 13.f4 ♘c5 14.♞c2 ♘cd7 15.♙c1 ♙b7 16.♙h3 Cekro-Glek, Vlaardingen rapid 2005, and now instead of 16...b5?! it was time for 16...d5!.

● 7...d6 8.0-0 ♙e6 9.d3 ♞c8 10.f4 (10.f3?! c6 11.♞c2 d5 12.c5 ♘bd7 13.♙e3 b6 Danzer-Maier, Bad Wiessee 1998) 10...♙h3 11.f5 ♙xg2 12.♘xg2 c6 13.♙a3 (13.h3 d5) 13...♞d7 14.h3 ♞e8 15.g4 d5 with good counterplay.

7.♘e2 ♙e6 8.d3 ♞d7 9.h3!

For if 9.0-0 ♙h3 is equal.

9...g5 10.f3 ♘a6 11.h4 0-0-0!? 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.♙xg5 ♞xh1+ 14.♙xh1 ♞h8 15.♙f2 ♘h7 16.♙h4 f5

Black has a certain amount of compensation, and later won due to a horrible blunder by White (in a winning position). Macieja-Volokitin, Bermuda 2005. I believe that Black should play 6...0-0 in this line.

Variation B

5.♞c2 0-0 6.d3

Or 6.♘f3 ♞c8 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.e4 d6 9.h3 ♘h7 10.d3 and the players agreed a draw in

Miles-Oratovsky, Lisbon 2000.

6...♞e8 7.♙d2 c6 8.♘f3 d5 9.0-0 ♙f8 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.d4 e4 12.♘e5 ♘g4 13.♘xg4 ♙xg4 14.f3 exf3 15.exf3 ♙d7

With satisfactory play for Black in G.James-M.D.Tseitlin, Port Erin 2004. Note that Black easily achieved his general plan of ...c6 and ...d5 in this game.

Variation C

5.♞b3 ♙xc3

In a rapid game I once played 5...a5!? 6.a3 ♙xc3 7.♞xc3 d6 8.d3 c5 9.e3 ♘c6 10.♘e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♞c7 NN-Glek, Gouda 2002.

6.♞xc3 d6 7.d3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♞e8 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.e4 ♙g4 11.♙e3 ♞d7 12.♘d2 ♙h3



And Black was OK in Lehtinen-N.Pedersen, Vammala 2005. After the exchange of the bishop for the knight, Black still had reasonable control over the dark squares (due to his pawns on d6, e5 and h6). Generally, setting up a battery with bishop and queen along the c8-h3 diagonal is good – aiming to exchange the fianchetto bishop.

Variation D

5.♘f3 ♙xc3

Playable is 5...e4!?, as 6.♘d4 ♙xc3 7.dxc3 0-0 8.0-0 ♞e8 9.b3 d6 is equal.

6.dxc3

The alternative is 6.bxc3!? d6 (6...e4 7.♗d4 0-0 8.0-0 d6 – 8...d5 9.cxd5 ♖xd5 10.d3 – 9.d3 ♜e8) 7.d4



– 7...♗bd7 8.c5 e4 9.♗d2 dxc5 (9...e3 10.fxc3 dxc5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗c4; 9...♖e7 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.♖c2 d5 12.c4; 9...d5 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4) 10.♗xe4 ♗xc4 11.♗xe4 0-0 12.0-0 ♜e8 13.♗g2 cxd4 14.cxd4 is slightly better for White.

– Playable is 7...♖e7!? 8.c5 e4 9.cxd6 cxd6 10.♗d2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.♗a3 ♗f5.

– 7...e4!? 8.♗d2 ♖e7 9.♖c2 (9.♗f1 0-0 10.♗e3 c5) 9...♗f5 (better than 9...e3 10.fxc3 0-0 11.c4, or 9...0-0 10.♗xe4 ♗xe4 11.♖xe4 ♖xe4 12.♗xc4 ♜c8 13.f3) 10.♗f1 0-0 11.♗e3 Solleveld-Glek, Netherlands tt 2002. And now Black should have played: 11...♗g6 12.♜b1 (12.g4 ♖e6) 12...c5 13.d5 b6 14.0-0 ♗bd7.

6...d6 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.♗e1 ♗e6 9.b3 ♖d7 10.e4 0-0-0

The position is about equal.

11.♗c2 h5 12.f3?! h4 13.♗e3 ♗h5 14.♖e1 hxg3 15.hxg3 g6

The alternative was ♜h7, but in any case Black is doing fine here (he later lost due to a blunder). Hulak-Bologan, Ohrid 2001. So again, Black had no trouble after the exchange on c3, developing with ...♗c6 and ...♖d7. It is noteworthy that Black can even consider queenside castling.

Variation E**5.♗d5 ♗e7!?**

Also not bad is 5...♗d5 6.cxd5 0-0 and now:

– 7.♗f3 ♜e8 8.0-0 c6 9.♖b3 ♖a5 10.a3 ♗f8 11.dxc6 ♗xc6 12.d3 d5 and Black was slightly better in Bursteinas-Gavrikov, Vilnius 2000.

– 7.e3 c6 8.♖b3 ♗a5 9.♗e2 d6 10.0-0 c5 11.d4 ♗d7 12.♖c2 b5 13.dxc5 ♗xe5 14.f4 ♗d7 15.♗d2 ♗b6 16.e4 ♜e8 17.♖h1 ♗b7 18.g4 ♗xd5 19.exd5 ♜xe2 C.Hansen-Bruzon, Skanderborg 2005.

6.♗f3 d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.d3

The final chance for 8.♗xe7+.

8...♗d5 9.cxd5 c5 10.dxc6 ♗xc6 11.a3 a5 12.♗d2 d5



Black has achieved his aim once again.

13.♜c1 a4 14.♗c3 d4 15.♗e1 ♗e6 16.♜xc6 bxc6 17.♗xe5 c5! 18.♗c6 ♖c7 19.♗xe7+ ♖xe7 20.♗xa8 ♜xa8

With excellent compensation in Cekro-Glek, Hellevoetsluis rapid 2004. So, avoiding the exchange on c3 after 4...♗b4 with the semi-active 5.♗d5 gives nothing either. Black may either take on d5, or play 5... ♗c7 as I did.

II. White's 4th move alternatives

Now what useful moves does White have apart from 4.♗c3?

6. ♖b3 ♘c6! 7. d5 ♘d4 8. ♖d1 ♙xc3+
9. bxc3 ♘f5 10. f3 ♜e7 11. fxe4 ♘d6!



12. ♙a3 ♜e5 13. ♖d3 ♘dx4 14. ♜c1
d6 15. ♘f3 ♜e7 16. 0-0 0-0 17. ♘d2
♘xd2 18. ♖xd2 ♜e8 19. e4 ♘g4
And Black was better in T. Christensen-
Glek, Rethymnon 2003

Variation D

4. e4!? ♙c5 5. ♘e2 ♘c6 6. h3 d6 7. d3
a6 8. ♘bc3 ♜b8

This looks like a good method to fight
against the 'Botvinnik Wall'.

9. 0-0 b5 10. ♘d5 ♘d4

Or simply 10...0-0.

11. ♙e3 0-0

Here 11...c6 12. ♘xf6+ ♜xf6 13. cxb5
♜xb5! or 13...cxb5 is also playable.

12. ♙xd4 exd4 13. b4 ♙a7

And here the alternative is 13...♘d5
14. bxc5 ♘c3 15. ♘xc3 dxc3.

14. ♜c1 ♘e8 15. cxb5 axb5 16. ♖b3
♙d7 17. ♖b2 c6 18. ♘df4 ♘c7 19. ♜c2

White cannot take the pawn of course:
19. ♘xd4 ♖f6 20. ♘fe2 ♘e6.

19...c5 20. ♜fc1 g5!?

Play is also unclear after 20...♘e6.



21. ♘h5 ♘e6 22. g4

The alternatives are: 22. e5 dxe5 23. bxc5
♜e7 24. c6 ♙e8 25. g4, and 22. bxc5 dxc5
23. e5.

22...f6 23. ♘eg3 ♙e8 24. ♖a3 ♙b6
25. bxc5 ♙xc5 26. ♖b2 ♙h8 27. ♜f1
♖a5 28. f4 ♖c3! 29. f5 ♖xb2 30. ♜xb2
♘d8 and Black won the ending in Romero
Holmes-Morozevich, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003.

Variation E

4. ♘f3 e4 5. ♘d4 ♘c6

This is stronger than 5...d5, when White has
two good options:

– 6. d3 dxc4 7. dxe4 ♙b4+ 8. ♘c3 0-0 9. 0-0
c6 10. ♘c2 ♙c5 11. ♖xd8 ♜xd8 12. ♙e3 and
the ending is preferable for White,
Stefansson-Mitkov, Lisbon 2000.

– 6. exd5 ♖xd5 7. ♙b3 ♖d8 8. ♘c3 ♙f5 9. 0-0
♙g6 10. d3 exd3 11. ♙xb7 ♘bd7 12. exd3 ♙e7
13. ♘a5 ♘c5 14. ♘c6 and White won in
Paunovic-Ramiro Ovejero, Ortigucira 2004.

6. ♘c2 ♘e5

Conveniently attacking the c4-pawn.

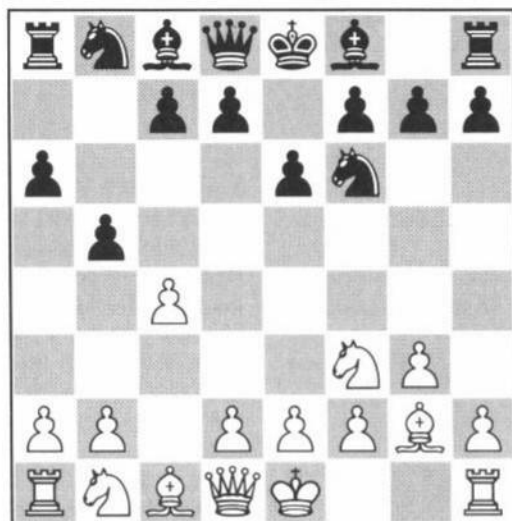
7. d3 exd3 8. exd3 ♙e7 9. ♘e3 d6
10. d4 ♘eg4 11. ♘c2 ♘h7 12. h3 ♘gf6
13. ♘c3 0-0 14. ♘e3 ♜e8 15. 0-0 ♙f8

Ghaem Maghami-Komliakov, Moscow 2000.

CHAPTER 6

Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Romanishin Gambit



1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 a6 4. ♗g2 b5!

This line was devised in the 1970s, when the Lvov Chess School – founded by Leonid Stein – became one of the leading schools in the USSR. The best-known exponents of this school (after Stein’s death at the age of 38) Alexander Beliavsky and Oleg Romanishin won various medals in USSR Championships.

It was Oleg Romanishin who introduced a new strategy (in fact a modernised version of an Alekhine strategy, one that later was further developed by Kasparov) – a positional pawn sacrifice in the opening (not a traditional gambit for quick development). One of Romanishin’s inventions is:

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 a6 4. ♗g2 b5

However, 4. ♗c3 is a serious alternative, so I will first show you how Black gains satisfactory play after 4...d5.

4. ♗c3 d5



5.cxd5

Here transposing into a Catalan Opening with 5.d4 is not very good for White. After 5...dxc4 White has trouble regaining the pawn:

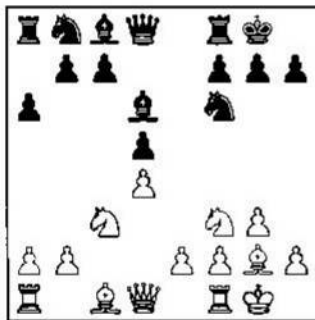
– 6.♘e5 b5 7.♙g2 ♖a7 8.a4 b4 9.♘a2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♙xg2 11.♗xg2 ♘c6 with an excellent game, Loginov-Aseev, Berlin 1992.

– 6.♙g2 b5 7.a4 b4 8.♗b1 ♗b7 9.0-0 c5 10.♗c2 ♙d5 11.♙d1 ♘c6 and White has no compensation for the pawn. I.Sokolov-Nikolic, Sarajevo 1987.

5...exd5 6.d4

Possible here is 6.♙g2 ♙e7 (not the blunder 6...d4?? which loses after 7.♗a4+ ♘c6 8.♘d4) 7.0-0 0-0 8.d4 c6 9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♘d7 ♙xd7 11.♗b3 b5 12.♙g5 a5 13.♗c2 ♙c8 and Black has excellent chances, Spiridonov-Romanishin, Yerevan 1989.

6...♙d6 7.♙g2 0-0 8.0-0



8...♘bd7

Quite good is also 8...♙e8 9.♙g5 c6 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.c4 dxe4 12.♘xc4 ♙c7 13.♙fe1 h6 14.♙xf6 ♘xf6 15.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 16.♙xe8+ ♗xe8 17.♙e1 ♗d8 and White had nothing in the game Villamayor-Zelcic, Elista Olympiad 1998.

9.♙f4

White gains nothing either after 9.♙g5 c6 10.♗c2 ♙e8 11.♙fe1 h6 12.♙f4 ♙xf4

13.gxf4 ♘f8 14.♘e5 ♘g4! 15.e3 ♗h4 16.♘f3 ♗h5 17.♘e2 ♗g6!, Espig-Luther, Glauchau ch-DDR 1987.

9...♙xf4 10.gxf4 ♘b6 11.♘e5 ♙f5 12.♙c1 ♘e4 13.e3 ♘xc3 14.♙xc3 c6 15.♗h1 f6 16.♘f3 ♘c4 17.♘h4 ♙d6

And Black was fine in Nogueiras-Nikolic, Havana 1987.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.♙g2 b5!

Now I called this line the Romanishin Gambit, but this needs some explanation perhaps. Black's 3...a6 and 4...b5 really do constitute a gambit after 5.♘d4 – when Black will lose a pawn on the queenside. Black gets a lot of compensation though. In the Volga Gambit Black is satisfied with the open a- and b-files. In the Romanishin Gambit Black will on top of that get a dominant central position. Black's position in the centre is so strong that accepting the gambit is in fact by no means White's most popular response. In the course of this article we will investigate:

- A) 5.0-0
- B) 5.b3
- C) 5.♘d4

Variation A

5.0-0 bxc4

Also interesting is Murey-Van der Wiel, Lyon 1988, which went instead: 5...♙b7 6.♗b3 ♘c6 (6...b4!?) 7.d3 bxc4 8.dxc4 ♙b8 9.♙d1 ♙c5 10.♘c3 ♘d4 11.♘d4 ♙xg2 12.♗a4 ♙b4 13.♗a5 ♙xc4 14.♗xg2 ♙xd4 15.♗xa6 ♙c6.

6.♗a4 ♙b7 7.♗xc4

Weaker is 7.♙e5?! ♙xg2 8.♗xg2 c5 9.♘a3 ♙e7 10.♘xc4 0-0 11.d3 ♗c7 12.♙d2 a5! 13.f4 d6 14.♘f3 ♘c6 with an excellent game for Black, Webb-Romanishin, Hastings 1976/77.

7...c5



Black has succeeded in exchanging his b-pawn for White's c-pawn – thus gaining influence in the centre. Moreover, unlike in so many Catalan positions he has managed to oppose his bishop on the main diagonal. Clearly, Black is OK, a verdict that was borne out in practice:

– 8.b3 e7 9. b2 0-0 10.d4 d5 (also playable are 10...xf3!? 11. xf3 d5 12. Wd3 Qc6 and 10...cxd4 11. Wxd4 Qc6) 11. Wd3 Qbd7 12. Qc3 a5 13. Qa1 Qe4 and Black has an excellent game, Fioramonti-Pelletier, Switzerland 1999.

– 8. Qc3 e7 (8...d5!? 9. Wb3 Wc8) 9.e4 0-0 10.d3. Now, 10...Qc6 11.e5 Qd5 12. Qxd5 exd5 13. Wg4! was played in Gofstein-Mikhailchishin, Leningrad 1976, when 13...f5! 14.exf6 Qxf6 would have given Black a good game. Instead of 10...Qc6 Black can also continue 10...d5 11.exd5 exd5 12. Wb3 Qc6, and 13. Wxb7? is not possible on account of 13...Qa5 trapping the queen.

Variation B

5.b3

Strangely enough, this modest continuation has set Black practical problems. We will investigate two lines:

- B1) 5...c5
- B2) 5...Qb7

Variation B1

5...c5 6. Qc3 Qa5

Also playable is 6...Wb6 with the following examples:

– 7.e3 Qb7 8. We2 Qc6 9.0-0 e7 10.d4 0-0 11. Qb2 b4 12. Qa4 Qxa4 13.bxa4 Qc6 14. Qd2 Qac8 15.d5 exd5 16.cxd5 Qa5 17. Qa1 Qe8! with a satisfactory game for Black, Filippov-G.Giorgadze, Bugojno 1999.

– 7.e4 Qb7 8. We2 Qc6 9.0-0 Qd4! 10. Qxd4 cxd4 11. Qd1 d6 and Black is slightly better, Tratar-Zelcic, Pula 2001.

– 7.e4 Qc6 8.e5 Qg4 9.0-0 Qb7 10. We2 h5 11.h3 Qh6 12.cxb5 axb5 13. Wxb5 Wc7 14. We2 Qf5 15. Qb5 Wb6 16. Qb2 Qa6 with compensation, Stohl-Wells, Austria 2000/01.



7. Qe5

White cannot expect any advantage with castling. For example, 7.0-0 Qb7 8. Qb2 Qc7 9. Wc2 (after 9.d3 0-0 10. Wd2, Damljanovic-Romanishin, Vrsac 1989, 10...Qc6 would have led to an equal game) 9...Qc6 10.a3 bxc4! 11.bxc4 Qb8 12.c3 0-0 13. Qe2 h6 14.h3 Wc7 15. Qf4 d6 16. Qab1 (Ribli-Romanishin, Altensteig 1992) and now 16...Qa8 would have equalised.

7...Qa7 8.cxb5 axb5 9.a4 Qb7 10.0-0 Qxg2 11. Qxg2 d6 12. Qf3 Qb7

Completing a remarkable manoeuvre.

13. Wc2



13...♙e7

Also possible is 13...bxa4 14.bxa4 ♙e7 15.♙b2 0-0 16.♘b5 ♘bd7 17.d4 ♚c8 with a good game for Black, Vaganian-Nikolic, Reggio Emilia 1987/88.

14.♙b2 bxa4 15.bxa4 0-0 16.♘b5 d5!?

An improvement over a previous game.

17.♘e5 ♖a6 18.♜f1 ♘bd7 19.d3 ♚c8

And Black had no problems in Stangl-Romanishin, Dortmund 1991.

Variation B2

5...♙b7



6.0-0

● White gets no advantage after 6.♘a3 b4 7.♗c2 c5 8.a3 a5 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♙b2 0-0 11.d3 (Hjartarson-Kuligowski, Lone Pine

1984) and here 11...♘c6 would have given Black a good game.

● A serious alternative for 6.0-0 is 6.♘c3. Now Black is slightly worse after 6...bxc4 7.bxc4 c5 8.♚b1 ♙c6 9.0-0 ♘c7 10.♚e1 0-0 11.e4, Dizdarevic-Cebalo, Budva 1986. While 6...c6 is interesting. The game Gabriel-Aronian, Batumi Ech-tt 1999, went: 7.0-0 ♙e7 8.d4 0-0 9.c5 d6 10.cxd6 ♘xd6 11.♘e5 ♖b6. Black's main move is 6...b4 when the lines fork after 7.♘a4:



– 7...d6 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.d4 ♙e7 10.♘b2 (or 10.♗e1 ♘xg2 11.♗xg2 0-0 12.d5 exd5 13.cxd5 ♘e4 14.♙e3 ♙f6 15.♚c1 ♘b6 16.♘xb6 cxb6 17.♚c6 b5♞, Granda-Romanishin, Moscow 2003) 10...0-0 11.♘d3 a5 12.♙b2 c5 13.e3 ♖b6 14.a4 ♜fd8. Kasparov-Korchnoi, Brussels blitz 1987.

– 7...d5!?! 8.cxd5 ♘xd5! 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.d3 0-0 11.♖c2 ♘bd7 12.e4 ♙b7 13.h3 c5 14.♙c3 ♚c8 15.♚ac1 ♘b6 16.♘xb6 ♖xb6 17.♘e5 ♜fd8 18.f4 a5 19.g4! with somewhat the better game for White, Pigusov-Romanishin, Irkutsk 1986.

6...c5

Here 6...♙e7 7.♘c3 b4 transposes into previous variations.

7.♘c3

The placid 7.d3 ♙e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♖c2 ♘c6 10.♙b2 d5 11.♘bd2 ♖b6 12.♚ab1 ♜fd8 13.a3 dxc4 14.bxc4 b4! 15.axb4 ♘xb4 16.d4

a5 is not dangerous for Black, Albur-Romanishin, New York 1989.

Much more serious is 7...b2. After 7...e7 8.d3 gains nothing. Bagirov-Romanishin, Manila Olympiad 1992, continued: 8...bxc4 9.dxc4 d5 10.dxc5 0-0 11.d4 b7 12.dxc5 dxc5 13.d4 dce4 14.a4 e8! Black has an excellent game.

So after 7...b2 e7 White should continue with the logical 8.d3. After 8...bxc4 (here 8...b6 transposes into previous variations, while 8...d5!? 9.d4 dxc4 10.bxc4 cxd4 11.dxd4 xg2 12.xg2 b4 is very interesting) 9.bxc4 d6 practice has vindicated Black's opening concept:

- 10.d3 0-0 11.d5? dxe5 12.xb7 B8 13.d4 dxc4, Adamski-Romanishin, Kiev 1978.

- 10.Bb1 Bb8 11.d4 0-0 12.d3 (after 12.xf6?! gxf6 13.Bb6 c7 14.Bb3 d5 15.c2 f5 16.f6 17.f1 c6 Black is better, Zaichik-Ivanov, Vilnius 1978) 12...a8 13.c3 c7 14.d2 d6 15.e3 h6 with equality, Akopian-Romanishin, Groningen 1991.

7...b6

Also not bad is 7...a5 8.e3 e7 9.e2 bxc4 10.bxc4 0-0 11.Bb1 c6 12.e4 d6 13.Bb3! a7 14.d4 cxd4 15.dxd4 a8 16.e3, Akopian-Svidler, Yerevan Wch-tt 2001, and here 16...d7 followed by 17...d6 would have equalised. In my opinion, 7...b4 is also good.

8.e3 e7 9.d4

Here 9...e2 allows a typical manoeuvre: 9...d4! 10.dxe4 dxc4 11.b2 (or 11.d3 b7 12.b2 0-0 13.d4 d6 14.dxc5 cxc5 15.cxb5 cxb5! =, Andersson-Van Wely, France 2002) 11...bxc4 12.cxc4 b7 13.d1 xg2 14.dg2 0-0 15.g4 f6 and Black stands well, Schlosser-Aseev, Brno 1991.

9...0-0

Also interesting is 9...d6!?. Play is equal af-

ter 9...d4 10.b2 0-0 11.dxc5 cxc5 12.dxe4 dxe4.

10.d5

After 10...e2 good is 10...d5! 11.cxd5 exd5 12.dxc5 dxc5 13.d1 e8 14.f1 d7 with equality, Bischoff-Boudre, Pau 1988.

10...exd5 11.cxd5 d6 12.e4 d7 13.e1 fe8 14.c2 f8 15.h3 g6 16.e3 a5!

with an excellent game for Black, Panchenko-Lugovoi, Pardubice 1997.

Variation C

5.d4

The old adage that one can only refute a gambit by accepting it, does not hold true for the Romanishin Gambit as I hope to demonstrate below. Black now has a sound positional approach in the form of 5...d5, and a more daring tactical variation starting with 5...c6.

C1) 5...c6

C2) 5...d5

Variation C1

5...c6 6.cxb5 axb5 7.dxb5 cxb5! 8.xa8 d5

Trapping the bishop is the point of Black's play.



9.c2

Gaining a sort of tempo. After 9.a4 a5 10.c2 d7 11.b7 b4 12.0-0 d6 13.d3

♖a7 14. ♗c8 ♗c6 15. ♗e3 d4 White has terrible problems with his bishop at c8, Reis-Damaso, Lisbon 1999.

If instead 9. ♖b3 ♗d7 (not 9... ♖a5? 10. ♖c3) 10. ♗c3 ♖a5 11. ♗xd5 exd5 12. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♖c7 14. 0-0 ♗e7 15. d3 0-0 16. ♗f4 ♖c6 Black has an excellent game, although White has a rook and three pawns for two pieces, Komljenovic-Zelcic, Royan 1988.

9... ♗d7 10. 0-0

Bad is 10. ♗b7? ♗e4 11. d4 ♗d6 ♢, Kohnert-Davidovic, Dortmund 1989. In Ehrenfeucht-Adamski, Warsaw 1990, Black held a strong initiative after 10. b3 ♖a5 11. ♗b7 ♗e7 12. ♗b2 0-0 13. ♗d4 b4 14. 0-0 ♖b5 15. ♖c7 ♖xe2.

10... ♗e7 11. d3 0-0 12. ♗e3 ♗g4 13. ♗f4 ♖b6 14. h3 ♗f6 15. ♗e3 ♖a6

With advantage to Black, Mukhtarov-Panchenko, Katowice 1993.

Variation C2

5... d5 6. cxb5 axb5

6... e5 is an interesting attempt: 7. ♗c6 ♗xc6 8. bxc6 ♗c5 and now:

- 9. e3 ♗g4 10. f3 ♗h5 11. d4 ♗d6 12. dxe5 ♗xe5 13. 0-0 ♖b8 with quite good counterplay, Espig-Tischbierek, East-German Championship, Eilenburg 1984.

- 9. 0-0 h5! 10. e3 d4 with active play in the centre, Manakova-Bogdanovski, Nis 1995.

7. ♗xb5 c6



8. ♗5c3 c5

8... e5 is a different strategy: 9. d4 e4 10. ♗d2 h5! 11. f3 exf3 12. ♗xf3 ♗d6 13. ♗g5 ♗bd7 14. 0-0 ♖b6 15. ♖d2 0-0 with compensation for the pawn, Lagunov-Murdzia, Germany Bundesliga 1997/98.

9. 0-0

After 9. d4 cxd4 10. ♖xd4 ♗c6 11. ♖d1 ♗e7 12. 0-0 0-0 13. a3 ♗b7 14. ♗d2 e5 15. ♖b1 e4 16. ♗b3 ♗e5 17. ♖d4 ♗c6 18. ♖d1 ♗e5 19. ♖d4 Black could have taken the draw, but decided to play for a win:

19... ♗c4 20. ♖d1 ♖c8 21. ♗g5 ♖d8 22. ♖dc1 ♖f5 23. ♗e3 ♗xe3 24. ♖xe3 d4 25. ♗xd4 ♖xd4 26. ♖xd4 ♗c5 and in this position 27. ♗d5!! would have been decisive, Bellon-Romanishin, Olot 1975.

9... ♗c6 10. d3

Or 10. b3 ♗e7 11. ♗b2 0-0 12. d3 ♗a6 13. ♗d2 ♖b8 14. ♖b1 ♖a5 15. ♗a4 ♖fc8 16. ♖c1 ♗d7 17. ♖c1 ♗b5 and Black has compensation for the pawn, Schmidt-Bielezyk, Augustow 1975.

10... ♗e7 11. e4 0-0 12. ♖e1 ♗b4! 13. a3 ♗b7 14. exd5 ♗fxd5 15. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 16. ♗f1 ♗c6 17. ♗c3 ♗f6 18. ♖b1

Bad is 18. ♗e3? ♗xc3! 19. bxc3 ♖d5.

18... ♗d5 19. ♗e4 ♗d4



With enough compensation for the pawn in Albur-Romanishin, Leningrad ch-URS 1974.

CHAPTER 7

Dorian Rogozenko

A Spanish Surprise from Romanishin



Facing 5. ♔e2 with 5... ♔e7!?

Usually a surprise in the opening means that one of the players chooses an unexpected opening variation for his opponent. Everyone experiences such a surprise every now and then. When you are an active player, you develop some sort of reaction to cope with such a unpleasant situation. However, it is quite rare that such a surprise turns out to be a real shocker.

I consider myself to be an experienced chess player and I thought it would be impossible to surprise me in the opening to such an extent, that, for some time during the game, I wouldn't have a clue about what is going on. Of course, a move like 1...f5 in reply to 1.e4 can certainly be a big surprise, but I am talk-

ing here about surprises that would turn out to be objectively good moves. It happens rarely indeed that a strong move in the opening comes as a real surprise for a grandmaster. In fact, this never happened to me until two years ago, when my opponent after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.♚c2 suddenly played 5...♚e7.

Now, I am talking about an Internet rapid game, but it wasn't bullet or blitz, it was a 25-minutes rapid game with an increment after each move. Moreover, my opponent was a GM as well, we had a large audience to whom we had to explain our moves, and, so the setting of the game was very serious. After the first quick shock – when I saw 5...♚e7

on my monitor – I told myself: ‘mouse slip’, and I thought ‘poor guy (meaning my opponent), he spoils the game because of a stupid mouse slip.’ However, already after two moves I felt that something was wrong with my position and after another three moves I realized that Black had the advantage! My opponent convincingly outplayed me and after the game he said that 5...♞e7 was not a mouse slip at all (although by that time I had worked this out for myself of course), and that he had used it several times before in his tournament practice. Let’s take it step by step.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♗f6 5.♞e2

By playing 5.♞e2 White avoids lots of theoretical variations. It is often quite unpleasant for Black to face 5.♞e2 first of all due to the fact that it deprives the second player from the choice of the resulting type of positions (in the Ruy Lopez Black is usually the side that determines what variation to play). For instance, the Open Spanish is no longer possible.

With 5.♞e2 White protects pawn e4 and creates at some point the threat to take on c6 followed by ♗xe5. At the same time 5.♞e2 prepares a positional plan: 0-0, ♖f1-d1, c2-c3 and d2-d4. In order to decrease White’s influence in the centre sooner or later Black plays b7-b5 (usually at once – 5...b5), which gives White the additional possibility to play on the queenside with a2-a4 (the queen on e2 is well placed for that purpose as well). 5.♞e2 is a common guest in practice. There have been thousands of games played with it. Many strong players have employed it, such as, for instance, Anand, Kamsky, J.Polgar and Smirin. At present, the main advocate of this move on the highest level is Tiviakov.

After 5.♞e2 White expects to get a certain type of open position, where he would have a

slight initiative. But, as I explained above, you can surprise White with the answer **5...♞e7**



This strange-looking move (Black places the queen in front of the only available diagonal for the undeveloped bishop!) was played for the first time by Oleg Romanishin in 1970. Later it was employed a few times by Mikhaichishin and nowadays by Mikhailevski. In ECO there is just a single line mentioning this move.

Actually, 5...♞e7 contains a lot of arguments in its favour. First of all, Black protects pawn e5. Secondly, with 5...♞e7 Black prepares himself for White’s main idea – d2-d4 – since after ...e5xd4 the queen will attack pawn e4. Moreover, since the queen left the d-file White’s plan of placing the rook on d1 loses much of its attraction. Thirdly, for the moment Black refrains from the advance ...b7-b5, thus not offering White the plan with a2-a4. One apparent drawback is the dark squared bishop on f8. However, the solution is simple: Black is going to fianchetto it, since on the long diagonal it will exert a lot of influence on White’s pawn centre (in case of d2-d4, of course). Surely, White can refrain from the plan with d2-d4 and play d2-d3 instead, but, in that case, the move 5.♞e2 loses its sense. Moreover, in general, White can forget about the opening advantage when playing set-ups involving d2-d3.

Another surprise from Romanishin

Black will also quietly complete his development, with an equal position.

6.0-0

Without kingside castling White cannot start active play. The immediate 6.d4? is bad of course: 6...♖b4+ 7.♗c3 exd4 and Black is winning. Other moves:

● In answer to 6.c4 Black may try 6...♗d4 7.♗xd4 exd4 8.♙c2 with unclear play. In this line 8.d3?? loses a piece to 8...♖b4+, while 8.e5 d3 9.♖xd3 ♖xe5+ is equal. Instead of 6...♗d4 Black can also continue his development with 6...g6. After 7.♗c3 ♙g7 8.♗d5 ♗xd5 9.exd5



Black has two options:

– In the game Ciric-Mikhalchishin, Copenhagen 1991, Black obtained even chances after 9...b5 10.♙d1 ♗a7 11.d3 0-0 12.0-0 c6 13.a4 bxc4 14.dxc4 cxd5 15.cxd5 ♙b7 16.♙b3 ♗c8.

– Black would get fair compensation for the pawn after 9...e4! 10.dxc6 exf3 11.cxd7+ ♙xd7 12.♙xd7+ ♗xd7 13.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 14.gxf3 ♙ad8.

● Nothing is achieved by a delayed exchange on c6. After 6.♙xc6 bxc6 (6...dxc6=) 7.d3 g6 8.♗bd2 ♙g7 9.♗c4 ♗h5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♙g5 ♖e6 12.b4 d6 13.♗a5 ♙d7 14.♗d2 f5 15.f3 ♗f4! Black's game was preferable in Bischoff-Mikhalevski, Bad Endbach 1995.

Finally, 6.c3 g6 (or 6...d6 7.0-0 g6 8.d4 ♙d7) 7.0-0 (7.d4 exd4 8.0-0 ♙g7) 7...♙g7 transposes to the main line.

6...g6 7.c3

● Let's investigate the straightforward 7.d4 ♗xd4 8.♗xd4 exd4 9.e5



– Now, according to Mikhalchishin, bad is 9...♙g7 in view of 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙e1 hxg5 12.exf6 ♙xf6 13.♖f1 ♙e5 14.f4 and the Slovenian GM assesses this position in Chess Informant 31 as winning for White. However, there must be some confusion, since after the obvious 14...gxf4 Black is three pawns up. His next moves are most likely ...♗f8 and ...d6, after which it is White who should resign, since Black consolidates the position and remains with extra material: 15.♗d2 ♗f8 16.♗f3 d6 17.♙b3 ♙g4 18.♙ad1 ♙e8—+. Therefore, given the fact that after 9...♗d5 White has a possibility to improve – see 11.♖f3 – I think that 9...♙g7 is in fact a better move than 9...♗d5 which we will examine now.

– 9...♗d5 10.♙b3 ♗b6 11.c3 (I believe that in order to fight for an advantage White must use his lead in development. For that purpose he should play 11.♖f3, creating the threat 12.♙g5. Black must answer 11...h6, but such a move is an achievement for White. Only practice will show if White is able to use his lead in development and

achieve an advantage here) 11...d6 (11...dxc3 12.♗xc3 ♖g7 13.a4 a5 14.♗e3 0-0 15.♗b5 gave White very good compensation for the pawn in Vouldis-Frendzas, Chania 1995).

In practice, Black has been doing well from this position. In Strikovic-Flear, Elgoibar 1994, Black took over after 12.♞e1 dxe5 13.cxd4 ♖g7 14.dxe5 0-0 15.♗c3 ♗e6= 16.♞f3?! ♗xb3 17.axb3 c6 18.♗e3?! ♗d7 19.♞h3 ♗xe5 20.♗h6 ♞d7±.

While something similar occurred in Gurgenidze-Mikhalchishin, Tbilisi 1980, after: 12.cxd4 ♖g7 (or 12...dxe5 13.♞xe5! ♞xe5 14.dxe5 ♖g7 15.f4 ♗e6=) 13.♗c3 dxc5 14.dxc5 ♗e6 15.♗e3 (play is equal after 15.f4 0-0 16.♗e3 ♗xb3 17.axb3 f6 18.♗xb6 cxb6 19.e6 f5 Mikhalchishin) 15...♗xb3 16.axb3 ♞xe5! (better than 16...0-0=) 17.♞f3 0-0-0 Black took over the initiative and won later on.

The alternatives for 7.c3 and 7.d4 really will not hurt Black. I will cite a few examples:

● 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.d4 cxd4 9.♞c1 ♖g7 10.♗g5 ♞b4 11.e5 ♗d5 12.♗bd2 0-0 13.♗b3 ♞e8 14.a3 ♞f8 15.♞c4 h6 16.♗d2 ♗b6 17.♞xd4 d6 Black has a slight edge already, which increased after 18.♞b4? dxe5 19.♞a5 ♞d6 20.♗b4 ♞d5 Beulen-Flear, Antwerp 1994.

● 7.d3 ♖g7 8.♗c3 ♗d4 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.♗d1 0-0 11.♗g5 d5 12.e5 ♞e6 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.f4 ♖g7 15.c3 dxc3 16.bxc3 d4 (16...f6 17.d4 fxe5 18.fxe5 – 18.dxe5? g5± – 18...♞xf1+ 19.♞xf1 b5 20.♗b3 ♗d7 equal) 17.♗b3 ♞b6 18.c4 c5 19.♗f2 ♗d7 with even chances in Schula-Mikhalevski, Pardubice 1996.

● 7.♞e1 ♖g7 8.♗c3 0-0 9.♗d5 ♗xd5 10.exd5 ♞b4! 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.dxc6 d5 13.c3 ♞d6 14.d4 e4 15.♗e5 f6 16.♗d7 ♗xd7 17.cxd7 ♞xd7 18.c4 f5 Black's game is slightly preferable. Jovanovic-Blehm, Patras 1999.

● In the above-mentioned game of mine I played 7.♗c3 and after 7...♗d4



Black had at least equal prospects. Black's queen is well placed on e7, while White's queen is misplaced on e2! The game continued: 8.♞e3 c5! 9.d3 b5 10.♗b3 ♗b7 11.♗e1 ♗xb3 12.axb3 ♖g7 13.f4 exf4 14.♞xf4 d5 with a clear edge for Black. Rogozenko-Mikhalevski, worldchessnetwork.com 2004.

7...♖g7

A reasonable alternative is 7...d6. Now the quiet 8.d3 gives nothing after 8...♖g7 9.♗bd2 ♗d7 10.♞c1 0-0. In Masyagutova-Bezgodova, Serpukhov 2004, Black gained a pleasant edge after 11.♗f1? ♗d4! 12.♗xd4 ♗xa4 13.♗f3 ♗d7.

After 8.d4 ♗d7 practice has seen:

– 9.♗g5 ♖g7 10.♗bd2 h6 11.♗h4 exd4 12.♗xc6 (not 12.cxd4? g5 13.♗g3 b5 14.♗b3 g4+) 12...bxc6 13.cxd4 g5 14.♗g3 ♗h5 15.♞d3 0-0 Black was preferable in Amin-Sarwat, Cairo 2003.

– 9.d5 ♗b8 10.♗c2 ♖g7 11.c4 a5 12.♗c3 ♗a6 (the position is equal) 13.♗e1 0-0 14.a3 ♗c5 15.♞b1 a4 16.♗d3 ♗xd3 17.♞xd3 ♗h5 18.♞d1 ♞e8 19.♗e3 f5 20.f3 b6 21.♞e2 and the draw was agreed in this King's Indian type of position. Dovliatov-Zulfugarli, Azerbaijan ch 1999.

8.d4

The best continuation. If 8.♞e1, then per-

fectly justified is the plan 8...d6 9.d4 ♖d7, with approximate equality.

In the game Kruppa-Mikhalevski, Yerevan 1997, Black went for the sharper 8...0-0-0 9.d4 exd4 10.cxd4 ♖b4 11.♗d1 d5 and after complications an approximately equal end-game arose: 12.e5 ♘e4 13.a3 ♖a5 14.♘bd2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 ♖b6 16.h3 ♘xd4 17.♘xd4 ♖xd4 18.♗b4 ♖xd1 19.♗axd1 ♗d8 20.♗e7 ♗e6 21.♗xd8 ♗xd8 with compensation for the exchange.

8...exd4 9.e5

Black is better after 9.cxd4 ♖xe4 10.♖xe4+ ♘xe4 11.♗e1 d5 12.♘c3 ♗e6 13.♘xc4 dxe4 14.♗xe4 0-0-0.



9...d3!

Black has to play this timely advance.

- 9...b5?! 10.♗c2 (White also develops an initiative after 10.♗b3 d3 11.♗d1 ♘g4 12.♗g5 ♖c5 13.♘bd2) 10...d6 11.exf6!? ♖xe2 12.fxg7 ♗g8 13.♗e1 ♖xe1+ 14.♘xe1 and White is better.

- 9...♘d5 is also not enough. In the game Stepovaia Dianchenko-Demina, Sochi 1987, Black was victorious in the end, but White's play can be improved more than once: 10.♗b3 ♘b6 11.♗g5 ♖c5 12.cxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♖xd4 14.♗d1 ♖c5 15.♘d2 (Here 15.♗c1 ♖a5 16.♖f3 0-0 17.♗e7 just as 15.♘c3 0-0 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♗xd5 ♖b6 18.♗c1 promise White a better game)

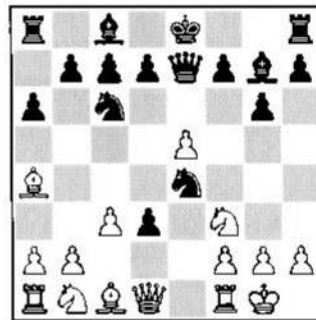
15...0-0 16.♘f3 ♖b5 17.♗d3? (17.♖c2 ♖c6 18.♗ac1 with compensation) 17...d5 18.exd6 ♗f5! 19.♗e3 ♖xe2 20.♗xe2 cxd6 21.♗d1 d5 and Black had superior chances.

10.♖d1

After 10.♖xd3? Black simply takes the pawn: 10...♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♖xe5 with a clear edge.

10...♘e4

Dangerous is 10...♘g4: 11.h3 (11.♗xc6 dxc6 12.h3 ♘xe5 - 12...♘h6 13.♖xd3± - is the same as 11.h3; interesting is 11.♗g5) 11...♘gxc5 (11...♘h6 12.♗g5 ♖e6 13.♗b3+-) 12.♗xc6 dxc6 13.♘xe5 ♗e6 14.♗e1 ♘xh3 15.gxh3 0-0-0. Here Black might have sufficient play for the knight, but it is clear that White's position contains a lot of resources after 10...♘g4.



11.b4?

Ubilava wants to take away the c5 square, but in this sharp position this is too slow. Correct is 11.♗e1! ♘c5 12.♗g5! ♖e6 (perhaps 12...♖f8 with unclear play) 13.♗f6! (or 13.♗xc6 first) 13...0-0 (not 13...♘xa4 14.♗xg7 ♘xb2 15.♖d2 ♗g8 16.♗f6±) 14.♗xg7 ♘xg7 15.♗xc6 ♖xc6 (better than 15...dxc6 16.b4 ♘d7 17.♖xd3 with a nice initiative) 16.b4 ♘e6 17.♖xd3 Black must still complete his queenside development, therefore White's prospects look slightly preferable. However, with accurate play Black is

able to equalize: 17...♞d8! (White holds the initiative after 17...f6 18.exf6+ ♞xf6 19.♖bd2 d6 20.c4) 18.♖bd2 (18.♖d4 ♜xg2+! 19.♜xg2 ♖f4+ 20.♜g3 ♖xd3 21.♞e3 ♖b2 and the knight escapes) 18...d6 19.♞e3 (19.exd6 ♜xd6 20.♜xd6 ♞xd6 is equal) 19...dxe5 20.♖xe5 ♜d5 21.♖b3 f6 22.♖f3 (22.♖g4 ♜g5) 22...♜d3 23.♖fd4 ♜xe3 24.♞xe3 ♖xd4 25.♖xd4 ♜f8 26.♞ae1 ♖d7 with equal chances in the ending.

11...♖xe5 12.♞e1 f5 13.♖f4

Alternatively, 13.♖xc5 ♖xe5 14.f3 is insufficient because of



14...♜h4 (also good is 14...c6 15.fxe4 fxe4 followed by 16...d5) 15.g3 ♖xg3 16.hxg3 ♜xg3+ 17.♜h1 when Black has at least perpetual, but he can play for more with 17...b5!.

13...♖c4 14.♖fd2

White had more chances to escape after 14.♜xd3 ♖b2 15.♜c2 ♖xa4 16.♜xa4, although his compensation for the pawn is not enough.

14...♖b2 15.♜b3 ♖xa4 16.♜xa4 0-0



The tactics work out well for Black. His advantage is huge. The game Ubilava-Romanishin, Sukhumi 1970, continued:

17.f3 ♖c5! 18.♜d1 ♖e6 19.♖xc7 d6 20.♖b6 ♖d7 21.♖c4 ♞ae8

Black has completed his development, while White's forces on the queenside remain out of play.

22.♖c7 ♜h4 23.♖xd6 ♖xc7 24.♖xe8 ♞xe8 25.♞xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♜xd3 ♜e1+ 27.♜f1 ♜e3+ 28.♜h1

Losing is 28.♜f2? ♜c1+ 29.♜f1 ♜b2.

28...♖b5 29.♜d1 ♖e6

Black is winning.

30.♖a3 ♜xc3 31.♖c2 ♜d3 32.♞c1 ♜xd1+ 33.♞xd1 ♖a4 34.♞d2 ♖c3 35.♞f2 ♜f7 36.a3 h5 37.♖e3 ♖d4 38.♞e2 ♖b5 39.♞e1 ♖b2 40.♞b1 ♖d4 41.♖d5 ♖c4 42.♖c3 ♖f4 43.♖a4 ♖d3 44.♖c5 ♖a2 45.♞f1 ♖xc5 46.bxc5 ♖xc5
0-1

CHAPTER 8

Tibor Karolyi

The Nadanian Attack



Preparing ...g5

What should we do if our opponent aims to play the Torre Attack (1.d4, 2.f3 and 3.g5), or the London System (1.d4, 2.f3 and 3.g4)? Do we allow him to play his next moves almost without thinking (e3, c3, d3, bd2, 0-0 and so on)? Such positions are really solid and very hard to shake. (Think of the solid Slav – here White has a tempo more.) Moreover, these players often play nothing but the London System with White, and, consequently, they have great experience playing against Black's main set-ups. In this chapter I would like to turn your attention to a new idea for Black on the second move. One that sprang from the fertile mind of that original thinker Ashot Nadanian.

In Singapore the company Intchess Asia organizes chess training sessions, but sometimes pupils are given the opportunity to play a round robin tournament against some of the trainers. In one of these tournaments my trainer colleague Ashot Nadanian introduced a new opening in his game against one of the other title holders. Now, we all know Nadanian from his fantastic 5.a4 against the Grünfeld (see also SOS-2, Chapter 17, where Jonathan Rowson explains the ins and outs of the improved Nadanian). This time the novelty comes as early as the second move!

After 1.d4 f6 2.f3 Nadanian plays 2...h6!?. The move has been played, but

Ashot is the first one who constantly follows it up with ...g5 whenever this is reasonable. Should his line be called a defence or an attack? I would opt for the latter. Think of the numerous lines where White plays an early g4 these days. Surely, such a bayonet move is made to attack.

By the way, Nadanian is a pupil of Shkarov just like Garry Kasparov was. Naturally, Nadanian's novelties are not so deeply analysed as Kasparov's, and they are also made in a completely different spirit. Still, the trainer from Baku deserves praise for letting both players develop in their own way. Ashot has enormous respect for Shkarov, not only as a trainer, but as a kind person as well.

But let's see the games! I will present three games with the logical continuation 3.c4. In Mascarinas-Nadanian White played 3.b3. It is in the notes to this game that I have analysed all 3rd move alternatives for 3.c4. Please note that I have used some of Nadanian's blitz games on the ICC (Internet Chess Club) – his handle is Sergirina.

□ Rico Mascarinas

■ Ashot Nadanian

Singapore 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 h6!? 3.b3!?

The experienced Filipino international master makes an interesting decision. He doesn't want to refute the opening, he just wants to get a playable position. Black's second move shows that his dark-squared bishop will almost certainly be developed to g7. So White starts opposing it on the long diagonal. Most probably Mascarinas had in mind that in a King's Indian-like position Black is likely to play for ...e5 or for ...c5. In case of the latter the bishop stands well on b2. While in the first case the bishop may well succeed in stopping ...e5 completely.

We will deal with 3.c4 in the next games. However, since there are virtually no serious games with 2...h6, I should like to demonstrate the reader the rich possibilities after some of the 3rd move alternatives:

● 3.♗f4 White plays the London System all the same. Black has two reasonable responses:

– 3...d6 4.e3 (4.h3 g5 5.♗h2 ♗g7 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♗d3 ♜d7 and Black achieved what he was aiming for: a double-edged playable middlegame) 4...g5 5.♗g3 ♘e4 6.♗d3 ♘xg3 7.hxg3 ♗g7 8.♗bd2 ♘c6 9.♞e2 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 Black is very much in the game because of his strong dark-squared bishop.

– 3...g5 4.♗g3 ♘e4 5.♗e5 (after 5.♗bd2 ♘xg3 6.hxg3 ♗g7 7.e4 d6 8.♗d3 e6 9.c3 ♞e7 10.♞e2 ♘d7 11.0-0 b6 Black's position is very flexible) 5...f6



6.♞d3 (or 6.♗g3 ♗g7 7.e3 d5 8.♗d3 e5 9.dxe5 ♘xg3 10.♗g6+ ♞e7 11.hxg3 fxe5 and Black is not worse) 6...d5 7.♗g3 and now Black can go after the bishop at once with 7... h5. In case of 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♘a6 9.♘c3 ♞a5 10.♘d4 ♘b4 the position is highly complicated.

● 3.♘c3 d5 (with 3...g5 Black can try a Pirc like Nadanian: 4.e4 d6 5.♗e3 ♗g7 6.♗e2, but I prefer White here) 4.♗f4 and now:

– 4...g5 5.♗e5 ♘c6 (or 5...♗g7 6.e4 dxc4

7. ♖xe4 ♜bd7 8. ♖xf6+ exf6 9. ♗g3 0-0 and Black will soon play f5) 6.e3 ♗f5 7. ♗b5 ♗g7 Black is again in the game.

– 4...e6 5. ♖d3 ♗d6 6. ♗xd6 cxd6 and Black is not worse.

– 4...♗f5 5.e3 e6 6. ♗d3 ♗xd3 7. ♖xd3 c6 8.e4 ♗b4 9.e5 ♜e4 and Black's position is safe.

● 3.g3 g5 (Black can stick to Nadianian's idea. However, with the natural 3...d5!? Black can transpose to a well-known Réti. In this particular set-up many prefer to play an early ...h6, making room for the light-squared bishop, as in the variation 4. ♗g2 c6 5.0-0 ♗f5) 4. ♗g2 ♗g7 5.c4 (or 5.h4 g4 6. ♜e5 d6 7. ♜d3 ♜c6 8.d5 ♜e5 9. ♜xe5 dxe5 10. ♖d3 with a very unusual position) 5...d6 (not 5...g4 6. ♜h4 d5 when the d4-pawn is more vulnerable than usual, yet I still prefer White here) 6. ♜c3 ♜bd7 (6...g4 7. ♜h4 ♜c6 deserves to be tested in practice) 7.e4 e5 and now:



– 8.0-0 g4 (8...0-0 9. ♗c3 ♜g4) 9. ♜h4 exd4 10. ♜f5 dxc3 11. ♜xg7+ ♜f8 12. ♜f5 ♜e5 when the position is messy.

– 8.d5 ♜c5 9. ♖e2 a5. It is hard to compare this with a normal King's Indian. Black should be in the game, since White is far away from the f5-square.

● 3.h4. White can stop g5 but giving up the g4-square is obviously worth more than

stopping g5. For example, 3...d6 (or 3...d5 4. ♗f4 ♗f5 5.e3 e6 6. ♜bd2 c5 and Black has a nice position) 4. ♗f4 g6 5. ♜bd2 ♗g7 6.e4 ♜g4 7. ♗d3 e5 8. dxe5 dxe5 9. ♗g3 ♖e7 Black has obtained a fighting game.

Of course all the above lines are speculation on my part; it will be interesting to see in which way theory will develop.

3...g5 4. ♗b2 ♗g7 5. ♜bd2



5...g4

Black can try to handle this opening in the Grünfeld spirit with 5...d5. After 6.e3 ♗f5 7. ♜e5 ♜bd7 8.c4 e6 White's advantage (if it exists at all) is barely visible. However, Nadianian likes to stick to his own plan – the bayonet attack with the g-pawn.

6. ♜e5

White can also move the knight to the rim. After 6. ♜h4 Black again can opt for the Grünfeld or the King's Indian set-up:

– 6...d5 7.e3 e5 (not 7...e6 8. ♗d3 c5 (8...b6) 9.0-0 ♜bd7 10.c4 when White seems to have the better chances) 8.dxe5 (8. ♗e2 exd4 9. ♗xd4 ♜c6) 8...♜h7 9.g3 ♖e7 10.h3 ♗xe5 11. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 and Black is not worse.

– 6...d6 7.e4 ♗d7 8. ♗d3 ♜c6 9.g3 (9.0-0 e5 10.d5 ♜b4 11. ♗e2 ♜fxd5 Black does all right here) 9...e5 10.d5 (or 10.c3 exd4 11.cxd4 ♜h5 (it is quite unusual to play on the long diagonal so early) 12.h3 ♜f4 (again this motif occurs unusually early) 13.gxf4

♖xh4 14.e5 dxe5 15.dxe5 0-0-0 Black is having a dangerously developed position) 10...♗e7 11.c4 when both sides have to adjust to the unconventional piece placement.

6...d6 7.♗d3 ♕f5

Black naturally wants to stop e4, but more to the point would have been 7...d5 with equal chances.

8.g3

With this double fianchetto White is looking for a small but lasting advantage. More ambitious is 8.f3, however this gives Black a lot of chances too. Bad is 8...d5 9.e4 dxe4 10.fxe4 ♗xe4 !1. ♗xe4 ♕xe4 12.♖xg4 ♕g6 13.0-0-0 when White has an advantage, as he is better developed and his structure is preferable. However, after 8...gxf3 9.exf3 (9.gxf3 ♕xd3 10.cxd3 ♗d5 11.♗c4 e6) 9...♗d5 10.♖e2 ♗c6 11.c3 ♖d7 12.g4 ♕g6 13.♗e4 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 f5 Black has nice play.

Best, however, is Nadeian's own suggestion of 8.e4! ♗xe4 9.♗xc4 ♕xe4 10.♖xg4 ♕g6 11.♗f4 with a huge positional advantage.

8...h5 9.♕g2 d5 10.h3!?

This stops h4. If 10.c4 then 10...h4 when the h-pawn is annoying White.

10...♗bd7 11.hxg4

Or 11.♗f1 e6 12.♗e3 ♕e4 and just like in the game Black can sacrifice the pawn.

11...hxg4 12.♙xh8+ ♕xh8 13.♗f1 e6 14.♗e3 ♕e4

Ashot keeps playing imaginatively. There are several alternatives in this position. With 14...♖e7 Black allows the exchange on f5, his position is resilient, but White keeps a small edge. For example, 15.♗xf5 exf5 16.c4 c6 17.♖c2 and White is a bit better. After 14...c6 15.♗xf5 exf5 16.c4 ♗e4 17.cxd5 cxd5 White's edge is small too. Quite playable is 14...♕h7 15.c4 c6 16.♗e5 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♗e4 and Black has a good game.

15.♕xe4



15...♗xe4!?

Nadeian voluntarily sacrifices a pawn for fluent play. Naturally, 15...dxe4 was all right as well. After 16.♗f4 ♖e7 17.♖d2 0-0-0 Black has a playable game.

16.♗xg4 ♖g5

Here 16...c5 17.c3 ♖c7 also gives Black compensation for the pawn.

17.e3

Black is OK after 17.♗h2. He can play 17...♖h5 18.♗f1 0-0-0 19.c3 ♖h1 20.♖g4 ♗df6 21.♖f4 ♕g7 when his pieces have a strong grip on the position. Also fine is 17...0-0-0 18.e3 ♕g7 19.♖f3 ♙h8 20.♗f1 ♖g6 21.0-0-0 and the Black pieces have good control over the centre. It would be very hard for White to do something with his extra pawn.

17...c5 18.♖f3

Or 18.♗ge5 ♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♕xc5 20.dxe5 ♖e7 21.♖f3 ♙h8 22.0-0-0 ♙h2 Black's counterplay is at least sufficient. Likewise, 18.a3 0-0-0 19.c4 dxc4 20.bxc4 ♕g7 21.♖e2 ♙h8 gives Black compensation.

18...cxd4 19.exd4 ♖d2+ 20.♖f1 ♙c8

Black is craving for creativity. After 20...♖xc2 21.♖e2 ♙c8 22.♖e3 (or 22.♗e3 ♖xe2+ 23.♖xe2 White can keep his position together) 22...♗df6 23.♗ge5 the position is balanced.

21.♙c1?

White picks up the glove to keep the fight ex-

citing, but keeping things 'dry' was stronger. With 21.♔e3! White can reach a slightly worse but tenable ending. 21...♚xd3+ (21...♚xc2 22.♔xc2 ♔d2+ 23.♚e2 ♔xf3 24.♚xf3 ♚xc2 25.♚c1 ♚xc1 26.♔xc1 and the game will end in a draw) 22.cxd3 ♔d2+ 23.♚e2 ♔xf3 24.♚xf3 ♔b8 25.♚h1 White can keep his position together regardless of the doubled pawns.



21...♔xd4?

Here Nadanian is overdoing his imaginative play. The prosaic 21...♚xc2! was much better. White drops a pawn after 22.♚xc2 ♚xc2 23.♚g2 (23.♚e2 ♚b1+ 24.♔c1 ♔xd4 wins) 23...♚b1.

22.♔xd4 ♚xc1+

The pretty point of his previous move.

23.♔xc1 ♔d2+ 24.♚e2 ♔xf3 25.♚xf3 ♚xc2

In this endgame Black has a rook and two pawns versus a bishop and a knight. It gives an edge, however Black can't activate his king.

26.♔d3 ♚xa2 27.♔f6+ ♔xf6 28.♔xf6 ♚a3?!

I do not like how Black plays the next few moves with his rook. Correct is 28...a5!. I think Black should try to create a passed pawn as quickly as possible, with the White king far away from the queenside. 29.♚e3 (29.♔c3 b5 30.♚e3 a4 31.bxa4 bxa4

32.♔d4 a3 33.g4 ♚c2 34.f4 a2 35.♔a1 ♚d2 Black wins) 29...b5 30.♔d4 (30.g4 a4 31.bxa4 bxa4 32.g5 a3 – the a-pawn is really dangerous) 30...a4 31.bxa4 bxa4 32.♚c3 a3 33.♚b3 ♚d2 34.♚c3 ♚e2 (34...♚b2) 35.♚b3 a2 36.♔b2 ♚d2 and Black has decent winning chances.

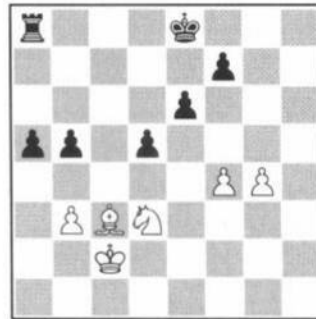
29.♔c1 ♔d7 30.♚e3!

White releases the burden of his light pieces.

30...♚a6 31.g4 ♚c6 32.♔d2 a5 33.♔d3 ♚c8 34.♔c3 ♚a8

Usually a rook is well-placed behind the pawn, but that holds for rook endings. Here it took far too many moves, which gave White the time to organise his defences.

35.♚c2 ♚e8 36.f4 b5



37.g5!

White already stopped Black from creating a dangerous passed pawn. Now he even fixes a weakness on f7.

37...♚a7 38.♚b2 ♔d7 39.♔d4 ♚a8 40.♔e5+ ♚e8 41.♔d3 a4 42.b4

Black cannot penetrate with his rook. Actually, with only one extra pawn he would suffer.

42...♚c8 43.♔c5 ♚c7 44.♔e5 ♚b7 45.♔f3 ♔d7 46.♔e5+ ♚c8 47.♔a2 ♚c7 48.♚b2

There is nothing left to fight for. The battle was great right from the second move. It was an exciting draw.

□ Sadkin Irwanto

■ Ashot Nadanian

Singapore 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 h6 3.c4 g5

So Black gains space against the most natural continuation as well. Nadanian is playing an 'extended' King's Indian.

4.♗c3 g4



Black is rather ambitious, he is not just satisfied with his space advantage he tries to confuse White's development as well.

Black can also continue in King's Indian fashion with 4...♗g7 5.e4 d6 and now:

● 6.h3 c5 7.♗e2 (or 7.d5!?) 7...cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♗c6 9.♗c2 (9.♗c3 is also playable) 9...♗d7 10.0-0? ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♗c5 and Black is already better. Fabsid (GM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes, went 12.♗d4 ♗e5 13.♗c2 ♗e6 14.f4 gxf4 15.♗xf4 ♗g8 16.♗h2 ♗d7 17.♗ad1 ♗xc4 with a clear edge for Black.

● 6.e5 (White wants to get an advantage in an aggressive way) 6...dxe5 7.♗xe5 ♗bd7 (7...♗fd7!?) 8.♗d3? (if 8.f4 then 8...c5!?) and Black can undermine the centre at once. After 8.♗xd7 ♗xd7 9.♗d3 e5!? 10.♗e2 (10.dxe5 ♗g4) 10...0-0 11.dxe5 ♗g4 12.♗c4 ♗e8 (or 12...f5 13.♗xb7 ♗xe5 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 f5 (the position is very

messy. Black's prospects are not bad) 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗g4! 10.f4 ♗d4! (Black is almost winning at move 10. Would you believe it?) 11.♗e2 gxf4 12.♗d5 and here 12...♗xe5! would have been even stronger than the game continuation 12...♗xe5. Mattenkattze (IM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes.

5.♗g1?!

I do not like this knight retreat. It seems to me that 5.♗h4 is the principled move (see Chiong-Nadanian); when the knight is at least in the game. For, 5.♗d2 see the game Chuong-Nadanian.

The situation reminds me a bit of the English Attack in the Scheveningen, when in one of the main lines Black plays an early ...b4. First, they all started to move the knight to e2. Then they played ♗b1 (just like in this game). Finally they settled on ♗a4 and that seems to cause the biggest problems for Black.

The blitz game PalaciosL1 (IM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5 minutes, went: 5.♗e5 d6 6.♗d3 ♗g7 7.e4 ♗c6 8.♗e3 e5 9.dxe5 (9.d5 ♗d4 10.c5 is unclear) 9...dxe5 10.♗e2 (10.♗a4 ♗d7 11.0-0-0!?) 10...♗e6 (10...h5!?) 11.b3?! (11.♗c5!) 11...♗d4 and now Black could be content with the result of his opening play.

5...♗g7 6.e4 d6 7.♗ge2

White can go for a Four Pawns Attack with 7.f4. After 7...gxf3 8.♗xf3 c5 9.d5 ♗g4 10.♗f4 ♗d7 Black is in the game. However, 8.gxf3! is interesting when the missing g-pawns seem to favour White.

Therefore, Black should continue with 7...e5 8.fxe5 (after 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 10.f5 the queenless middlegame is unusual, but OK for Black) 8...dxe5 9.d5 and now:

– 9...♗a6 10.b4! ♗d7 11.a3 when White is a bit better.

– 9...a5 10.c5 ♗a6 11.♗e3 White has an edge.

– 9...♙f8!? is somewhat unusual, but it stops White's play on the queenside. After 10.♙e3 ♘a6 11.♙d3 ♙c5 12.♙d2 ♙d6 the position is rather unclear.

7...c5



8.d5

After the natural 8.♙e3!? Black has some options:

– 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.♙e2 and I think having the pawn on g4 instead of the usual g6 now favours White as Black will have problems where to castle safely.

– 8...♙a6!? (Black can develop slowly, as White's development on the kingside does not come easy) 9.♙d2 ♙d7 10.♙d1 ♙a5 or 10...♙c8 and the position is complex.

– 8...♙bd7!? 9.♘g3 cxd4 10.♙xd4 ♘e5 Black may well have a good position.

– 8...b6 9.dxc5 dxc5 (9...bxc5 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.exd6 ♘c6 Black is short of full play for the pawn) 10.♙xd8+ (10.e5 ♙xd1+ 11.♙xd1 ♘h7 Black avoids being in trouble early on, and can probably catch up in development) 10...♙xd8 11.0-0+ ♘c7 12.♙f4+ ♘b7 13.♘g3 ♘c6 is not convincing for White.

Unfortunately the players agreed a draw at this early stage.

A pity because they probably would have paved the way for future theory.

I should like to present you with some notes as to how play might continue.

I believe Ashot was going to disturb White's play on the kingside with

8...h5!?

Probably he would not have played on the queenside with 8...♙a6. After 9.♘g3 ♘c7 10.♙d3 a6 11.a4 b6 12.0-0 White is better. It is hard to speculate how Nadian was going to develop his pieces. All lines lead to an original position. For example 8...♙bd7 9.♘g3 ♘e5 10.f4 gxf3 11.gxf3 ♙g8 12.f4 ♘g6 13.♙d3. Finally, White answers 8...c6 with 9.♘g3.

9.♘g3 h4

Or 9...e6 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♙b5 ♘e7 12.♙f4 ♘e8 and Black's king is too airy.

10.♘f5 ♙xf5 11.exf5 ♙c8

Also playable is 11...♙d7 12.♙d3 ♙a6 (12...h3 13.g3 ♙a6 14.♘e4 ♙g8 15.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 16.f3 gxf3 17.♙xf3 ♘c7) 13.♘e4 ♙g8. Interesting is 11...♙h5!?. Weak is 11...h3 12.gxh3! (12.g3 ♘bd7 13.f3 gxf3 14.♙xf3 ♘e5 Black is kicking) 12...gxh3 13.♙g1 ♙h6 14.f4 ♘bd7 15.♙xh3 ♙a5 16.♙d3 0-0-0 17.♙d2 White is a pawn up.

12.♙d3 ♙bd7

12...h3 13.g3 ♘bd7 14.♙f4 ♙h6 is unclear.

13.h3 ♘e5 14.hxg4 ♘xd3+ 15.♙xd3 ♘xg4 16.♙g5 ♙h5 17.♙xe7 ♘xe7 18.♙e2+ ♘f8 19.♙xg4 ♙xf5 20.♙xf5 ♙xf5 21.♙xh4 ♙e8+

and Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn.

□ Pham Chuong

■ Ashot Nadian

Singapore rapid 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 h6 3.c4 g5 4.♘c3 g4 5.♘d2!?

White sticks to the centre, on the other hand it has a price: pawn d4 lacks protection.

5...h5

Or 5...d6 6.e4 ♘g7 7.e5 dxe5 8.dxe5 ♘fd7 9.e6 ♘e5 10.exf7+ ♚xf7 11.♔d5 ♙f5 and Black has good piece play, too easy (GM)-Sergirina (IM), ICC 5-minutes 2005.

6.e4

It would be interesting to see how Black reacts to the attempt to undermine the g4-pawn: 6.h3. Let me illustrate some of his possible reactions.

– 6...♙h6 7.e4 d6 8.hxg4 hxg4 9.♙d3 is quite an original way to defend the h1 rook, but White should be better here.

– 6...♞g8 7.hxg4 hxg4 8.e4 d6 is hard to judge.

– 6...gxf3 7.♞xh3 (7.gxf3!?) 7...d5 8.♞h4 ♘c6 9.g3 ♙g4 is another unusual position. Can Black compensate for his weak h-pawn with his active piece play?

– 6...♙g7 7.hxg4 hxg4 8.♞xh8+ ♙xh8 9.e4 d6 10.♘b3 ♘c6 11.♙e3 Black probably has a playable position.

6...d6 7.♙e2

Or 7.♘b3!? e5 (7...♘c6 8.d5 ♘c5 9.c5 is a bit better for White; 7...b6!? 8.♙d3 ♘bd7 9.♙e3 c5) 8.d5 b6 (8...a5!?) 9.♙g5 ♙e7 is again quite an unorthodox position.

7...♘c6 8.♘b3 ♙g7 9.♙e3 e5

Nudanian suggests 9...h4!?

10.d5 ♙e7 11.♞d2

Here 11.c5 ♙h6!? (11...♘g6 12.♞d2) 12.♞d2 ♙xe3 13.♞xe3 ♘g6 14.g3 h4 15.0-0-0 ♞e7 16.♘b1 ♙d7 is playable for Black.

11...a5 12.a4 b6 13.0-0

Possible is 13.f3 which gives an unclear fighting position. 13...♙d7 (after 13...♘g6 14.♙g5 the pin is unpleasant; 13...h4 14.0-0-0 h3 15.♞d1 ♘g6 16.gxf3 gxf3 17.♙g5 ♙d7 is roughly equal) 14.♘c1 h4 (14...gxf3 15.gxf3; 14...♘g6 15.♙g5 ♞e7 16.♘d3 Black is somewhat passive here) 15.fxf4 (15.h3 gxf3 16.gxf3 ♘h5 Black is active) 15...♘g4 16.♙xg4 ♙xg4 17.♘d3

and it is largely a matter of taste which side you prefer.



13...♙xe4!?

Going for the imaginative solution as always. Black could just develop here with 13...♙d7! which is objectively the better solution. The position gives chances for both sides after 14.h3 gxf3 15.gxf3 ♘g6 16.♞d1 ♞e7.

14.♙xe4 f5 15.♘g5!

Best. The alternatives are fine for Black: 15.♘c3 f4, 15.♙d3 fxe4 16.♙xe4 ♙d7!, and 15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♙d7! – without the pressure on a4 Black would be rather passive.

15...f4 16.♙xf4 exf4 17.♘d4

After 17.♞xf4 ♞f8 18.♞e3 ♙e5 19.g3 ♘f5 20.♞d2 ♞d7 (20...♙d7 21.♙e6) 21.♘e6 ♞f7 Black keeps his position together.

17...♙h6

17...♙xd4 18.♞xd4 0-0 19.♙d3 ♘f5 20.♞xf4 ♘h4 21.♞d2 ♙xg2 Black is living dangerously here.

18.h4

Or 18.♞xf4 ♘f5! (18...♞f8 19.♞e3 Black is in serious trouble) 19.h4 0-0 and Black's pieces came alive very quickly.

18...♘g6 19.f3

After 19.♞d1 Black has 19...0-0! (not 19...♙e5 20.♞xf4 ♞e7 21.♞e3 White is better). Just like the greatest Armenian chess player Tigran Petrosian Black can sacrifice

an exchange for long-term positional pluses.
 20. ♖de6 ♗xe6 21. ♖xe6 ♜d7 22. ♖xf8 ♜xf8
 23. ♗d1 ♖e5 and Black is in the game.

19... ♜f6 20. ♖ge6

White acts at once. Maybe a preparatory move would have caused more problems. For instance, 20. ♗d3!? ♖e5 21. ♜de1 or 20. ♜de1!? at once.

20... ♗xe6 21. ♖xe6 ♜d7!



Black imaginatively solves the problem of his king. Petrosian won a great game against Kasparov with his extraordinary use of his king.

22. ♜c2 22.fxg4 ♖xh4 22... ♖e5
23. ♜b3 ♜ac8 24. ♜de1 24. ♜b5+ c6
24... ♗g7 25. ♗d3!? Finally White decides to go after Black's king. The endgame is equal after 25.fxg4 hxg4 26. ♗xg4 ♖xg4 27. ♜b5+ c6 28. ♜xb6 ♜xb2+ 29. ♜xb2 ♗xb2+ 30. ♜xb2 cxd5. **25... ♖xd3+ 26. ♜xd3 ♜xb2+ 27. ♖d1 ♗e5 28. ♜f5 ♜b3+ 29. ♖e2 ♜xc4+ 30. ♖f2 g3+ 31. ♖g1 ♖e7 32. ♜g5+ ♖d7 33. ♜f5 ♖e7 34. ♜g5+ ♖d7 35. ♜f5 1/2-1/2**

The dust has settled and White holds with a repetition. The Vietnamese boy is based in Singapore and is trained by Nadanian, they produced an interesting fight. This battle is an example of imaginative play right from the opening. The line stood the test once again.

□ **Luiz Chiong**

■ **Ashot Nadanian**

Singapore Masters 2005

1.d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 h6 3.c4 g5 4. ♖c3 g4
5. ♖h4 d5



So Nadanian decides to play a Grünfeld with a white knight on h4 (rather than on a4).

6.g3

The IM from the Philippines goes for a fianchetto line. By analogy we can think of other set-ups:

– 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.e4 ♖xc3 8.bxc3 e5 9.g3 exd4 10.cxd4 ♗g7 with excellent counterplay against White's centre.

– 6. ♗f4!? ♗g7 7.c3 c5 8.dxc5 ♜a5 9. ♜b3 and now White wins after 9...dxc4? 10. ♗xc4 0-0 11. ♖g6. So Black should play 9... ♖c6 10. ♜d1 ♖e4 with unclear play.

– Unclear could also be the verdict after 6. ♜b3 dxc4 7. ♜xc4 ♗e6 8. ♜b5+ ♖c6 9.e3 ♜b8.

6...c5 7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8. ♗g2 ♖xc3 9.bxc3 ♗g7 10.e3

Nadanian analyses 10. ♜a4!? ♗d7 11. ♜a3 cxd4! 12. ♗xb7 and now:

– 12... ♖c6 13. ♗xa8 ♜xa8 14.0-0 dxc3 with compensation for the exchange.

– 12... ♗c6 13. ♗xa8 ♜xa8 14. ♖f5 ♗f6 15.0-0 ♜d5 16.f3 gxf3 17. ♜xf3 dxc3 18. ♜a7 ♖d7 with unclear play.



10...♙a5

Starting a manoeuvre to prevent White from castling, but best would have been 10...♙c6 with equality.

11.♙d2 ♗a6 12.♗e2 ♗xe2+ 13.♙xe2 ♖c6 14.h3 h5 15.hxg4

Perhaps 15.♗ab1 e5 16.d5 is stronger.

15...hxg4 16.♙e4

Here, as in the game, 16.♗ab1!?! can be answered by 16...♗h5!?!.

16...♗h5 17.♙g2 ♗xh1 18.♗xh1 f5 19.♙d3 e5 20.d5

Now if Black moves his knight he would be in grave trouble. Nadeian reacts well with a positional pawn sacrifice in the ending.

20...e4! 21.dxc6 exd3+ 22.♙xd3 ♙e6 23.♙f4

Black also has clear compensation after 23.cxb7 ♗d8+ 24.♙c2 ♙d5 25.♗h7 ♙xb7 26.♗xg7 ♙xg2 27.♗xa7 ♙e4+ 28.♙d1 ♗b8. **23...0-0-0+**



24.♙c2 ♙g8 25.cxb7+ ♙xb7 26.♗h5

And here the players agreed a draw. Stronger would have been 26.c4 and White still has a slight endgame advantage.

So we have seen that there is no clear way to find an advantage for White after the amazing 2...h6. Of course playing this line entails some risks. Playing such aggressive chess leaves no room for errors, but that holds true for White as well. One can use 2...h6 at the right moment against the right opponent. We shall see how this line will develop.

CHAPTER 9

Stefan Löffler

Sacrificing a Tempo in the Slav



First 2...c6, then 4...c5

Competing in an open tournament in Malaysia I had brought neither my notebook, nor even a pocket chess-set. My only preparation consisted of a visit to an internet café to connect to an online database. Here I mouse clicked through a few games of the other three titleholders in the open to check their opening repertoires. One grandmaster from the Philippines usually employed 4.♖c2 against the Slav. When I was actually paired against him with Black, I wondered if I ought to risk the Slav. For, I had never concerned myself with 4.♖c2. I am not sure whether I got the idea in the evening – whilst eating the incomparable Laksa noodle soup, of which they are rightly proud in Penang –

or in the morning, during my daily exercise in the hotel swimming pool. Anyway, I decided to risk the Slav, and in case of 4.♖c2, I was going to improvise with 4...c5. As it turned out the grandmaster disregarded his favourite 4.♖c2 that day, and played 4.e3 instead.

Seven weeks later, only one day after my return from Asia, I had to play in a second Bundesliga match in Berlin. My opponent was Igors Rausis. The Latvian grandmaster hadn't played a single game that season, so I didn't have a clue what was in store for me. When he played 4.♖c2, I had the chance to consider my idea from Penang

whilst sitting in front of some actual chess pieces. I told myself, that that which had been true in Malaysia could not be wrong now, and I decided to leave the thinking to my opponent.

The experiment was a success. Soon I had gained forty minutes on the clock and the game ended in a draw. What more could I want with Black against a grandmaster? The real surprise occurred when I entered the position in my database at home. In the only two games that I found it wasn't white's, but Black's move. I could hardly believe it, and called up a friend with a bigger database to double-check. Need I mention that he found no previous games either? Wow, I had played a novelty on move 4, not in some obscure opening, but in a position that has occurred in hundreds and hundreds of games. Now we need to see if the idea holds up against a more rigorous analysis.

□ **Igors Rausis**
 ■ **Stefan Löffler**

Germany Bundesliga B 2005/06

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♝c2

The moves 4.♘c3, 4.e3 and 4.cxd5 are more popular, but White gets a better deal with 4.♝c2. You don't need to know an awful lot of theory to play this move, and White obtains a slight plus in nearly every game. Black usually responds with 4...g6, 4...e6 or 4...dxc4. Against the latter, Rausis has favoured 5.e4!? b5 6.b3 cxb3 7.axb3 on a number of occasions.

4...c5

What on earth is going on? Didn't Black just play 2...c6? Why would you strengthen the d5-pawn, if you light-heartedly weaken it two moves later? True, there are some other lines in the Slav where Black sacrifices a tempo (first ...c6, then ...c5) in similar fash-

ion. For instance, after 4.♘bd2 e6 5.e3, the move 5...c5 is popular. Indeed, in SOS-4 Mikhail Gurevich has written about 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 a6, and if 6.♝c2 then 6...c5!?. In the Queen's Gambit Declined when White has played his queen to c2 without taking on d5 first, Black is often well-advised to play ...c5. For, as long as the knight is still on b8, it can be actively developed to c6. From this square it can either attack the queen from b4, or simply put pressure on d4. However, let's not rush things.



5.cxd5

White has a number of possibilities of course. Concerning 5.♘f4, 5.♘g5, 5.g3 and 5.♘c3, I believe that it shouldn't be too difficult to find a satisfactory answer behind the board.

Two serious alternatives remain:

– 5.dxc5 ♘c6 (but not 5...♝a5+ 6.♝c3 ♝xc5 7.cxd5 and the pawn is lost. In case of 5...d4 White need not play 6.b4 a5 7.♝a4+ ♘d7 8.b5 ♘f5 9.♘b2 (9.c6!?) 9...e5 10.♘xe5 ♘xc5, but should prefer the simple 6.e3 ♘c6 7.exd4 ♘xd4 8.♘xd4 ♝xd4 9.♘e3, when, at the very least, regaining the pawn will cost Black valuable time) 6.cxd5 ♝xd5 7.♘c3 ♝xc5 8.e4 g6 (I prefer this to 8...♘g4, when White can effectively regroup his pieces with 9.♘e3 ♝a5 10.♘d2) 9.♘e3 (here 9.a3!? ♘g7 10.b4 ♝h5 11.♘b2 is in-

teresting) 9...♖a5 (9...♗h5 10.♘b5) 10.h3 ♘g7 and Black is solid.

– 5.e3 cxd4 (it is possible to keep the tension with 5...e6, but transposing to a promising line from the Panov Variation may be considered, from a theoretical point of view, a success for Black) 6.exd4 g6 (the other transposition to the Panov with 6...♙c6 7.♙c3 ♘g4 is unfavourable here. White need not go in for 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♗b3, but can play more strongly with 8.♙e5 ♘xd4 9.♗a4+ ♘d7 10.♗d1 ♙c6 11.♘d7 followed by 12.cxd5. Finally, after 6...e6 the position of the queen on e2 may become an asset) 7.♙c3 ♘g7 8.cxd5 (after 8.♘g5 0-0 9.♘xf6 ♘xf6 10.♘d5 ♘g7 Black effortlessly regains the pawn) 8...0-0 9.♗b3 (if 9.♘c4 ♘bd7 10.♘g5 ♘b6 11.♘xf6 then Black gains a nice initiative for the pawn with 11...exf6 12.♘b3 ♚e8+) 9...♘bd7 10.♘g5 ♘b6 11.♘xf6 ♘xf6 12.♙e2 e6 13.dxe6 ♘xe6 14.♗d1 ♙c4 15.b3, Drolet-Leveille, Québec 1991, and now Black can regain the pawn with 15...♘d6 16.♗d2 ♙f5 17.♚d1 ♚c8 18.0-0 ♘xd4 19.♘d4 ♘xd4 20.♗xd4 ♗xd4 21.♚xd4 ♚xc3.

5...cxd4



With his fourth move Black presupposes that, after he has increased the tension in the centre, White's queen would be better-off on d1. This is best-illustrated by looking at the Austrian Defence. After 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5

3.cxd5 ♘f6 4.♙f3 (here White also has two other good options in 4.e4 and 4.dxc5) 4...cxd4 White has an agreeable choice between 5.♘xd4 ♘xd5 6.e4, and 5.♗xd4 ♗xd5 6.♙c3 ♗xd4 7.♘xd4. Both lines promise White a small edge. With the queen on c2, instead of on d1, things are a little different. Her majesty cannot take back directly on d4. And, what is more, after the knight takes on d4 it is not defended by the queen.

6.♗a4+

The alternative is 6.♘d4 ♘xd5 7.e4 (what else? After 7.g3 e5 8.♘b5 ♙c6 Black has no problems. Please note that in this line the materialistic 8.♗e4? ♘b4+ 9.♘d2 0-0 10.♗xe5 loses a piece after 10...♚e8 11.♗h5 ♙f6 12.♗h4 ♚e4) 7...♘b4. Now, with the queen on d1, White has options like ♘e3 or ♘b5+, here there only remains: 8.♗a4+ ♘8c6 9.♙xc6 ♙xc6 10.♙c3.

This position has occurred several times in practice (via the Austrian Defence – so without one pair of moves). Black is at crossroads:

– 10...g6 11.♘c3 ♘g7 12.♘b5 0-0 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 (14.♗xc6? ♚b8 15.♚b1 ♗d3) 14...♗c7 and now in Bachmayr-Ter Minasjan, Munich 2000, White could have gained a slight but enduring plus with 15.♘d4.

– 10...c6 11.♘c3 ♘c7 (with 11...♘b4 12.♘b5 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♗a5 14.♚ac1 a6 15.♗xa5 ♘xa5 16.♙e2 Black does not solve all his problems – ♚fd1 and ♙a4-c5 and White keeps some pressure, Illescas-Salmensuu, Elista Olympiad 1998) 12.♙e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♚fd1 a6 15.♚d2 ♗c7 16.♗d1 ♚fd8 and White's initiative has gone up in air, Renet-Dlugy, Paris 1986.

6...♗d7 7.♗xd4

In my database I found some two dozen examples with this position. Most of them arose after the move order 1.d4 d5 2.♙f3

♠f6 3.c4 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 5.♖a4+ ♗d7 6.♗xd4. In all games, but one, Black transposed into his repertoire with 6...♗xd5 (a position that White could have forced anyway with 5.♗xd4 instead of 5.♖a4+). Important for the evaluation of this position is 7.♗c3 ♗xd4 8.♗xd4 ♗d7 9.♗db5 ♗a6 10.e4 e5 (Stohl-Votava, Portoroz 1998), or 8...a6 9.g3 ♗d7 10.♗g2 ♗c6 (among other practical examples this is Portisch-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1978). The results in practice were in White's favour. So, why, as long as you get this position with the queen on d7 instead of on d8, not use the opportunity to take back on d5 with the knight?

7...♗xd5 8.♗c3

Rausis told me after the game that he had not considered my reply to the text. If he had, he would have preferred 8.e4.



However, is that really so favourable? Black has three squares to draw back his knight to:

– 8...♗f6 was Frank Marshall's choice versus Roy Turnbull (in New York 1911). He had no problems after 9.♗c3 ♗c6 10.♗b5?! ♗xd4 11.♗xd4 e5 12.♗f3 ♗b4. White could have developed a strong initiative with 10.♖a4, for example: 10...e6 11.♗f4 ♗b4 12.♗b5! ♗xe4 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.♗ad1.

– 8...♗b6 9.♗c3 ♗c6 10.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 11.♗e3 e6 12.0-0-0! (Black holds his own after 12.♗e2 ♗b4 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗a4

or 12.a3 ♗c8 13.♗b5 ♗a4) 12...♗c8 13.♗b1 and now the threat of winning a pawn with 14.♗b5 forces Black to play the ugly 13...♗a8 (13...♗a5? 14.♗e5).

– 8...♗c7 is the solid option. 9.♗c3 ♗xd4 (after 9...♗c6 10.♖a4 e5 11.♗e3 ♗b4 12.♗c1 or 10...a6 11.♗e3 b5 12.♖b3 e6 13.♗e2 ♗b7 14.0-0 White keeps the pressure) 10.♗xd4 e5 11.♗db5 ♗xb5 12.♗xb5+ ♗d7 13.0-0 ♗b4 14.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 15.♗d1+ ♗e6 16.♗d5 ♗d6 and if 17.f4 then 17...g6 – Black has no problems.

8...e6

After 8...♗xc3? 9.♖xc3 ♗c6 10.e4 e6 11.a3 Black, for better or for worse, has to resort to 11...f6 to finish his development – White's advantage is not in doubt. No, it is better not to allow White's queen on the c3-g7 diagonal. Black could have tried to reach the final example from the previous note, though, with 8...♗c7.

9.♗xd5 exd5

Black has not enough for the pawn after 9...♗c6? 10.♗f6+ gxf6 11.♖xf6 ♗b4 12.♖c3 or 11...♗g8 12.a3. Playable is 9...♗xd5 10.♖xd5 exd5, when White has only a marginal edge because of the isolated pawn.



10.e4!

This is stronger than 10.♖e5+ ♖e6, or 10.a3 ♗c6 11.♖d3, when Black can activate his pieces and may hope to gain counterplay.

10...dxe4 11.♖xe4+

After 11...♗e7 12.♗d3 Black has nothing better than 12...♖e6, so the queen move is best played now:

11...♖e6 12.♗d3

Black has more difficulties reaching equality after 12...♗b5+ ♘c6 13.♖xe6+ ♗xe6 14.0-0. Thus, 14...♗c5 15.♗d2 0-0 16.♖fc1 would lose a pawn. The best option is 14...a6 15.♗xc6+ bxc6, to gain at least the bishop pair and a stronghold on d5. For example, 16.♗f4 f6 17.♗d4 ♗d5 18.♖ac1 ♖c8 19.♖fd1 ♗f7 with about equal chances.

12...♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14.♗xd2

If 14.♗xd2, then 14...♖xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗d7 16.♖ac1 ♗f6 17.♖he1 0-0 and Black holds the balance.

14...0-0 15.0-0

Time to take stock: three central pawns have been exchanged. Black has no weaknesses. All that White has obtained is a passing lead in development. If Black keeps the queens on he has little to fear. After 15...♖h6 16.♖fe1 ♗d7 17.♗b3 ♗f6 18.♖f3 ♖b8 White's initiative starts to evaporate.

15...♖xe4? 16.♗xe4

Of course! The bishop controls b7 and the knight will add pressure on the queenside. After Rausis took on d2 with the knight, I only expected 16.♗xe4, when 16...♗c6 fully equalizes.

16...♗d7 17.♖fc1

17.♖ac1 is only optically stronger. After 17...♖d8 18.♖fd1 ♗f6 19.♗b3 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♗f8 21.♗f3 ♗e6 22.♗xb7 ♗xb3 23.axb3 ♖b8 the peace treaty may be signed.

17...♖d8 18.♗b3 ♗f6 19.♗f3 ♖b8 20.♗a5

Black can defend after 20.♖c7 ♗d5, and 20.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 ♗e6, for, if 22.♗xb7, then 22...♗xb3 23.axb3 ♗f8 transposes to the previous remark.

20...♗d5 21.a3?

Now Black may start to breathe freely. He would have to sweat for his half of the point after 21.♖d1 ♗e6 22.♖d4.

21...♗e6 22.b4 ♖d7 23.h4 ♗e7 24.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1

With a draw offer, that I turned down. The match was going badly for my team, so I pretended that I could squeeze something from this position.

25...b6 26.♗c6 ♗xc6 27.♗xc6 ♗f8 28.f4 ♗e7 29.♗f2 ♖c8 30.b5

White now has to take care of this pawn, but that is all that Black can achieve.

30...♖d8 31.♖xd8 ♗xd8 32.♗e3 ♗e7 33.♗d4 ♗d6 34.♗f3 h6 35.g3 ♗b3 36.♗e2 f6

Draw.

More food for thought

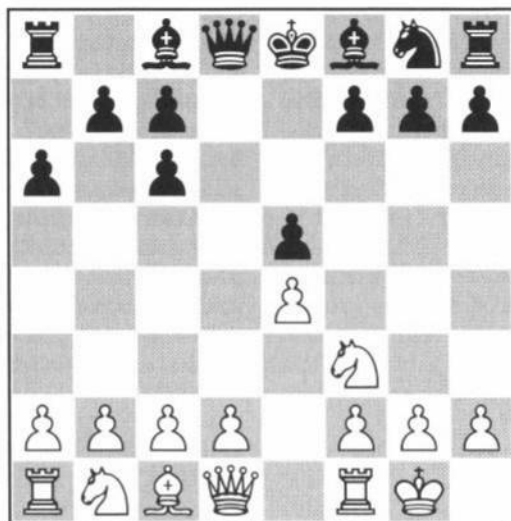
The second-best move for White against the Slav – not according to theory, but according to the statistics in the database – is by the way 4.♖b3. Against that move 4...c5 also looks playable, although, also after 4.♖b3 nobody has dared to sacrifice a tempo. Now, 5.cxd5 cxd4 6.♖a4+ would lead to the game Rausis-Löffler. White has a few alternatives though.

Suggestions for further analysis are: 6.e3!? dxe3 7.♗b5+, the immediate 5.e3, and the materialistic 5.♖b5+ (when 5...♗bd7 should be the best try for equality).

CHAPTER 10

Jeroen Bosch

SOS in the Ruy Lopez Exchange



Your weapons: 5...♔e7 and 5...♕e6

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♗c6 3.♕b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0

White's general strategy in the Ruy Lopez Exchange can be described in a few sentences: play d4 to trade the d-pawn for the black e-pawn, next exchange all pieces and win the ensuing pawn ending because of the kingside pawn majority. Of course chess is never that simple, and before the ending God created the middlegame. In the history of the Ruy Lopez Exchange it soon became clear that putting all your money on this one horse (with the immediate 5.d4 exd4 6.♔xd4 ♗xd4 7.♗xd4) is not sufficient. Black gets a perfectly playable ending because of his bishop pair. Enter the 11th world champion,

Bobby Fischer, who adopted 5.0-0 and transformed it into a subtle weapon. Nowadays, the Exchange Variation again has a fairly innocent reputation. Black has indeed several reliable lines to choose from. Still, there is little chance of surprising your opponent. Perhaps, some of the attraction of 4.♗xc6 even lies in the fact that there are fewer lines to learn, and that White's basic strategy is fairly straightforward.

The aim of this chapter is to present the reader with some possible surprise weapons versus the Spanish Exchange. It is good to realize that after 5.0-0 Black faces a direct, and a strategical, threat. First, having moved the king from the e-file, White now threatens

to take on e5. Second, White is ready to push d2-d4 and create that kingside majority. Protection of the e5-pawn is what Black will have to concentrate on, while, nevertheless, keeping in mind how to react to 6.d4. With the exception of 5...♘g4 (pinning the knight), Black will have to do one of two things: (1) directly cover e5; (2) indirectly protect e5 by blocking the e-file. Examples of type 1 include: 5...f6, 5...♖d6, 5...♗d6, 5...♗f6 and, our first SOS line, 5...♗e7. Examples of the second type are: 5...♗e7, 5...♗e7 and, the second subject of this article, 5...♗e6!?

A brief survey of Black's 5th move alternatives will be useful for our understanding of the merits of 5...♗e7 and 5...♗e6. I will give the lines in more or less ascending SOS order.

● 5...♗g4 6.h3 h5! 7.d3 ♗f6 (Black's direct play has prevented d4 for the moment. Still in the main line Black ends up in a slightly inferior ending) 8.♗bd2 ♗e7 9.♞e1 ♗g6 10.d4 ♗d6 11.hxg4 (finally White can take bishop) 11...hxg4 12.♗h2 ♞xh2! 13.♗xg4 ♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♞xh4 15.♗f3 with slightly better chances in the endgame.

● 5...f6. This may be called the main line. Black gets a reliable position after both 6.d4 exd4 7.♗xd4 c5 8.♗b3 ♗xd1 9.♞xd1 ♗g4 10.f3 ♗e6 and 6...♗g4 7.dxe5 (7.c3) 7...♗xd1 8.♞xd1 fxe5. Still while clearly protecting pawn e5, the move f6 is slightly weakening. Moreover, Black might like to use the square f6 for a piece.

● 5...♖d6. Another important move. Black protects e5, and is one move closer to queenside castling, which is often a sensible idea in the Exchange Variation. 6.♗a3 (6.d4 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4 8.♗xd4. Note that Black should not be afraid of this type of ending. Even when it is a move down compared to 5.exd4 exd4 6.♗xd4 ♗xd4

7.♗xd4). Here both 6...b5 7.c3 c5 and 6...♗e6 7.♗e2 f6 8.♞d1 ♗g4 are OK for Black.

● 5...♗e7. This clever move of Paul Keres' indirectly covers e5, although there is a tactical snag. 6.♗xe5 ♗d4 7.♗h5! (this is it!) 7...g6 8.♗g5 ♗g7 9.♗d3 f5 10.e5 c5 11.b3!?

leads to brutal complications.

● 5...♗d6 6.d4 exd4 7.♗xd4 f6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♗bd2 ♗e6 gives White a normal opening advantage.

● 5...♗e7. An interesting move, that shares certain similarities with 5...♗e6. Black plans ♗f6, ♗e7-g6 and kingside castling. 6.♗xe5 (6.♗c3 ♗f6 7.♗e2 ♗e6 8.b3 ♗e7 9.♗a3 g5 10.d4 g4 11.♞ad1! with a completely unclear position as in Zhang Zhong-De Vreugt, Wijk aan Zee 2003) 6...♗d4 7.♗h5 (7.♗f3 ♗xe4 8.♞c1 ♗g6 9.♗e5 ♗f5 is perfectly playable for Black) 7...♗e6! 8.d3 ♗f6 9.♗f3 (9.♗g5 ♗c5!) 9...♗xe4! 10.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 11.dxe4 ♗xe4 with equality in Brynell-Hector, Linköping 2001.

● 5...♗f6.



This move also has a certain SOS flavour about it. The early queen move looks a little odd compared to 5...♗d6, but Black is ready for 6...♗g4 and castling. A 19th century game went 6.d4 exd4 7.e5?! ♗g6 8.♗xd4 ♗h3 9.♗f3 ♗g4 10.♗g3 0-0-0, with the initiative in Schallopp-Harmonist, Frankfurt

1887. Instead of 7.e5?! correct is 7.♙g5 leaving Black with two options:

– 7...♗g6 (the old move) 8.♖xd4 ♘d6 (8...♙e7 9.♙xe7 ♘xe7 10.♘c5±) 9.♘bd2 (alternatives are 9.♗e3 and 9.♚d1) and now 9...♙e6 10.♘c4 gives White a slight edge. Interested readers may investigate 9...c5. For example: 10.♗e3 ♙e6 11.♚fd1 (11.♘h4 ♗h5 12.e5 h6! or 11.e5 ♙f8) 11...♘f6 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♘xe4 ♙f8 15.♚d2 h6 16.♙h4 b6 17.♚ad1 ♗e7 (Black plays, quite successfully, in the style of the Berlin Wall) 18.h3 ♘c6 19.♘c3 ♙e7 20.♘d5 ♚c8 21.c3 ♙xd5 22.♚xd5 ♚d8 23.♗f1 ♚xd5 24.♚xd5 ♙xh4 25.♘xh4 ♗e7! 26.f4 g5! 27.fxg5 ♗e6 28.♚d3 ♗xe5 29.♚e3 hxg5 30.♘f3 f6 and Black was better in Glek-Efimov, Porto San Giorgio 1999.

However, an improvement is needed over 10.♗c3! ♙g4 11.♙h4 ♘h6 12.♚fe1 b6 13.e5 ♙f8 14.e6 ♙xe6 15.♘d4 ♙d6 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.♗f3 with a dangerous initiative in Wiersma-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 2000.

– 7...♗d6, as played by Adams and Morozevich, is the other move. 8.♘xd4 (8.♗xd4 ♗xd4 9.♘xd4 promises even here – two tempi up compared to 5.d4 – very little) 8...♙e7 (8...♙d7 9.♗c3 ♙e7 10.♙xe7 ♘xe7 11.♘b3 0-0-0 12.♗e2 g5?! 13.♗e3 b6 14.♗xg5± Magem Badals-Morozevich, Pamplona 1995) 9.♙xe7 ♘xe7 10.♘c3 0-0 (better is perhaps 10...♙d7 11.♘b3 ♗xd1 12.♚axd1 0-0-0 13.♘d2 b6 14.♗c4 ♙e6 15.♘e3 c5 16.f4 f6 17.♗f2 ♚d4 equal, Fressinet-Adams, Bordeaux rapid 2000) 11.♘de2 ♚d8 12.♗c1 ♙g4 13.♘f4 ♘g6 14.♘xg6 hxg6 15.♗g5 ♙e6 16.♚ad1 ♗f8 17.a3 c5 18.♗e5 and White was slightly better in Magem Badals-Adams, Pula 1997. Finally I should like to point out that 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4 8.♘xd4 ♙d7 is identical to 5...♙e6 6.d4 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4 8.♘xd4 ♙d7 (see below).

We will discuss two lines in more detail:

A) 5...♗e7

B) 5...♙e6

Variation A

5...♗e7



This is a Smyslov favourite that deserves serious SOS attention. Given the chance Black will continue with ♙g4 and 0-0-0, often starting an attack with f6 and g5.

6.d4

It is necessary for White to play actively in the centre. Otherwise, Black continues in the above-mentioned manner:

– 6.b3?! ♙g4 7.h3 ♙h5 8.♙b2 f6 9.d3 ♘h6 10.♘bd2 g5! 11.g4 ♙g6 12.d4 (12.♗c4) 12...♘f7 13.dxc5 fxe5 14.♘c4 ♙g7 15.♘fd2 0-0-0 16.♗e2 h5 17.♘e3 hxg4 18.hxg4 ♗f6 19.f3 ♚h3 20.♗g2 ♙f8! 21.♗f2 ♚xd2!, with a winning position, Gheorghiu-Smyslov, Petropolis Interzonal 1973.

– 6.d3 ♙g4 7.h3 ♙h5 8.♙e3 0-0-0 9.♘bd2 f6 equal, Lenk-Möhring, Stralsund 1975.

6...exd4 7.♗xd4

The alternative is of course 7.♘xd4. After 7...♙d7 White sacrificed a pawn in Filipovic-Teofilovic, Bosnjaci 2004, with 8.♙e3. The game continued 8...♗xe4 9.♚e1 ♗e7 10.♘d2 ♗g6 11.♘c4 f6 12.♙f4 0-0-0. White should now have played 13.♙xc7!. Black is mated after 13...♗xc7? 14.♘b5+

Two Weapons against the Ruy Lopez Exchange

axb5 15. ♖d6+ ♕c8 16. ♘b6 mate! Instead of 13... ♕xc7? correct is 13... ♖e8 with just an edge for White. In the game White went crazy with 13. ♘b6+ cxb6 14. ♘b5 cxb5 15. ♖d6, having missed the only winning defence 15... ♖xg2+! 16. ♕xg2 ♖c6+.

More mundane is 8. ♘c3 0-0-0 9. ♘b3 (9. ♖f3 g6 10. ♖e3 ♖g7 11. ♘b3 ♘h6 12. ♖g3 ♘g4 13. ♖c5 ♖c6 14. ♖d4 ♖xd4 15. ♘xd4 ♖d6 16. ♖ad1 ♖xg3 17. hxg3 c5, when Black had an equal ending in Zhang Zhong-Kakageldiev, Jodhpur tt 2003) 9... ♘f6 10. ♖e2 g6 11. f3 ♘h5 12. ♖e3 f5 13. ♖ad1 ♖g7 14. ♘c5 ♘f4 15. ♖c4 ♖e5 16. ♘xd7 ♖xd7 17. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 18. ♖c5 ♖xc3 19. bxc3 b6 20. ♖c4 ♘e6 21. ♖xa6+ ♕b8 22. ♖b1 with a slight edge in Barreras Garcia-Smyslov, Cienfuegos 1973.

Variation A1

7... ♖g4



8. ♖f4

Clearly the best move.

– 8. ♘bd2 ♖d8 (8... ♖c5 9. ♖e5+ ♖xe5 10. ♘xe5 ♖e6=) 9. ♖a7 ♖b4 10. ♘b3 ♖xf3 11. gxf3 ♘e7 12. ♖f4 ♘c8 13. ♖e3 ♖d6 with equality, Garcia Palermo-Smyslov, Buenos Aires 1978.

– 8. ♘e5 deserves an exclamation according to Suctin. Nobody has tried it out in practice though. In my opinion, 8... ♖d8 9. ♖c3 ♖e6

or 9... ♖c8 followed by ♖b4 or ♖c5 looks rather pleasant for Black.

8... ♖xf3 9. gxf3 ♘f6 10. ♘c3 ♘h5 11. ♖g3 ♖d8



A popular position in practice.

12. ♖e3

This is stronger than 12. ♖a4 ♘xg3 13. hxg3 ♖b4 equal, Bednarski-Smyslov, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

12... ♘g3 13. hxg3 ♖c5 14. ♖ad1 ♖xe3 15. ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 16. ♖d1+ White has the slightly better ending (Brynell-Hector, Gothenburg 1996, and Dvoretzky-Smyslov, Odessa 1974).

Variation A2

7... ♖f6



Moving the queen out early in the game? Moving the same piece twice? Sometimes

the rules of healthy opening play just don't seem to apply.

8.♘c3

– 8.♖a4 ♘g4 9.♙g5?! (9.e5 ♗g6 10.♘g5 ♙f5 11.♗b3 and White has the initiative according to Keres. 9...♗f5!? is a likely improvement in this line) 9...♗xb2 10.♘bd2 ♗b4 11.♗xb4 ♙xb4 12.♞ab1 ♙xd2 13.♘xd2 f6 14.♙e3 0-0-0 ♣ Vasiukov-Zaitsev, Rostov on Don 1971.

– 8.♗xf6 ♘xf6 9.♙f4± Suetin. However, 9...♙e6! 10.♙xc7 ♘xe4 11.♞c1 ♙d6! looks equal to me.

8...♗xd4 9.♘xd4 ♙d7 10.♙f4 0-0-0 11.♞ad1 ♘e7 12.♞d2 ♘g6 13.♙g3 ♙b4 14.♘de2 f5! 15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♙g4 17.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 18.♞f7 ♞d7 19.♞xd7 ♗xd7 Marholev-Radulski, Bulgarian Championship, Plovdiv 1999. The bishop pair and an active king give Black superior chances in this ending.

Variation B

5...♙e6



The good points of 5...♙e6 are: (1) indirect protection of e5; (2) developing a piece and preparing queenside castling; (3) ready to meet a future d4 with exd4 and ♙c4 attacking the rook. Possible disadvantages are: a future ♙g4 (often a good move at some stage) will cost a tempo, and a possible ♘g5 or ♘d4 will attack the bishop.

We will examine:

B1) 6.♘xe5

B2) 6.♘c3

B3) 6.d4

Other moves do not look very dangerous:

– 6.♗e2 planning ♞d1 and d4 is an idea, but 6...♗f6!? looks like a good reply, as it prevents d4. 7.d4 exd4 8.♙g5 ♗g6 and there is no ♗xd4 as in the 5...♗f6 line.

– 6.b3 c5 (or 6...♙d6 7.♙b2 – 7.d4 ♙g4 – 7...♘f6 8.♞e1 ♘d7=) 7.♘xe5 (7.♙b2 f6) 7...♗d4 8.♘c4 ♗xe4 with equal play. Instead, 8...♗xa1 9.♙b2 ♗xa2 10.♘c3 ♙xc4 11.♘xa2 ♙xf1 12.♗xf1 is a weird line, but probably slightly better for White. It will take a lot of time before the Black pieces are starting to cooperate.

– 6.♞e1 ♗d6 and this compares favourably to the 5...♗d6 line. White does not have 7.d4 exd4 8.♘xd4?? because of 8...0-0-0 winning. Instead 8.♗xd4 is strongly answered by 8...c5! rather than 8...♗xd4 9.♘xd4 ♙d7= or 8...0-0-0? 9.♗a7!.

– 6.c3 ♗d3! (6...♘f6 7.♗e2 ♙g4) 7.♞e1 f6 8.♞e3 ♗d7 planning 9.d4 0-0-0. In the game Monroy-Verat, Breizh 2005, White played 7.♘xe5 ♗xe4 8.d4 0-0-0 9.♘d2 ♗d5 10.♘d3 c5 11.♘f4 ♗f5 12.♘xe6 ♗xe6 13.♘f3 with equal chances.

Variation B1

6.♘xe5 ♗d4 7.♘f3 ♗xe4

White may win some tempi now, but Black's position looks very healthy.

8.♘g5

The alternative is 8.♞e1 ♗g6 9.♘d4 0-0-0 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.d3 ♘f6!? 12.♞xe6 ♙c5 13.♙e3? ♗f5 14.♞xf6 gxf6 15.♙xc5 ♗xc5 16.♘c3 ♗b4 when Black was better in Sanchez-Garcia, Mondariz Baleario 2002. White should have played 13.♞e2 when after 13...♞he8 the lines fork:

– 14.♙e3 ♘d5! when 15.♙xc5?? loses to 15...♘f4.

Two Weapons against the Ruy Lopez Exchange

– 14. ♖xe8 ♜xe8 15. ♘d2 ♘g4 16. ♘c4 ♜xc4
17. dxe4 ♗xf2+ 18. ♖h1 ♘xh2 ♠.



8... ♖f5 9. ♘e6 fxe6 10. d3 0-0-0
11. ♘c3 ♘f6 12. ♖e2 ♗c5 13. ♗d2
13. ♗e3± Estrada. 13... ♜he8 14. ♜ae1
♗d4 15. ♘d1 e5 16. ♘c3 16. ♘e3 ♖e6=
16... ♘d5 17. ♖e4 g6 with an equal position.
Estrada-Radulski, Dos Hermanas 2002.

Variation B2

6. ♘c3

White makes a useful move preparing further action.

6... ♖d6 7. d4 exd4 8. ♘xd4 ♗c4!

This useful time-saver is one of the points of 5... ♗e6.

9. ♜e1 0-0-0 10. ♗e3 ♖g6 11. ♖f3 ♘f6



This diagram should clearly demonstrate one of the attractions of this SOS. With simple play Black has gained an edge.

12. a3

Neither 12. b3? ♗b4!, nor 12. ♜ad1 ♗b4!.

12... ♘g4 13. b3 ♗e6

Or 13... ♘xe3 14. ♖xe3 ♗c5 15. ♘f5 ♗xe3
16. ♘e7+ ♖b8 17. ♘xg6 hxg6 18. ♜xe3 ♗e6
with equality.

14. ♘xe6 ♖xe6 15. ♘e2 ♘xe3

Here 15... ♗d6!/? looks like a good alternative.

16. ♖xe3 ♖b8 17. ♘e7

Quite possible is 17... g5!/? planning 18. fxg5 h6.

18. ♘d4 ♖d7 19. ♘f3 16 20. e5 g5

21. ♖h1 21. fxg5 fxg5 22. ♘xg5 ♖f5

23. ♘f3 ♖xc2 ♠. 21... g4 22. exf6 ♗xf6

23. ♘e5 ♖f5



Black's chances are to be preferred, Navarro-Radulski, Andorra la Vella 2002.

Variation B3

6. d4

White's most direct move.

6... exd4 7. ♖xd4

As usual this type of ending gives White no advantage. However, 7. ♘xd4 ♗c4 8. ♜e1 c5
9. ♘b3 b6 is also OK for Black. The game I. Rogers-Webb, British Team Championship 2003/04, went 9... ♖xd1?! 10. ♜xd1
♗xb3?! 11. axb3 ♗d6 12. ♘c3 ♘e7 13. ♗c3
with a typical plus for White.

7...♖xd4 8.♗xd4 ♘c4!?

Getting the maximum out of 5...♗e6. However, 8...♗d7 is completely healthy, and indeed identical to both 5...♖d6 or 5...♖f6 6.d4 exd4 7.♖xd4 ♖xd4 8.♗xd4 ♗d7. 9.♗c3 0-0-0 10.♗c3 ♗e7



Black is already better as was borne out in practice:

– 11.♞fd1 ♗g6 12.♗b3 ♗e5 13.♗c5 b6 14.♗xf8 ♞hx8 15.♗d4 c5 16.♗dc2 ♗c4 ♞ Nakamori-Pesantes, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

– 11.♗b3 b6 12.a4 a5 13.♗d4 g6 14.♞ad1 ♗g7 15.b3 h6 16.♞d3 f5 17.f3 ♞hf8 18.♞fd1 fxe4 19.♗xe4 ♗d5 20.♗f2 ♗b4 21.♞3d2 c5 22.♗c2 ♗e6 ♞ Blaskowski-Timman, Essen 1994. Please note that this was a game from a clock simultaneous.

9.♞e1 0-0-0 10.♗e3 c5

Play was equal in Minet-Dobrev, La Fère 2004, after 10...♗b4! 11.c3 ♗f8 12.f3 c5 13.♗b3 b6 14.♗:ld2 ♗e6 15.f4 ♗f6 16.h3 ♗e7.

11.♗f3 h6 12.b3 ♗e6

Black has a very nice ending here. A healthy bishop pair guarantees good chances to play for a win.



13.c4?!

This weakens the dark squares.

13...♗f6 14.♗c3 ♗g4 15.♗c1 15.♗f4 g5. 15...f6 16.♗b2 16.h3 ♗e5 17.♗xe5 fxe5 18.♗e3 favours Black, but this was nevertheless the best chance for White.

16...♗d6 17.♞ad1 ♗e5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5

This ending (with the bishop on e5) is much worse. Black is ready to roll on the queenside. White's pawn majority, on the other hand, is rendered impotent. **19.h3** 19.♗a1. **19...b5 20.♗a1 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♗xc4 22.♗d5 22.♗:a4. 22...♗xd5 23.♗xe5 23.♞xd5 ♞xd5 24.exd5 ♗xa1 25.♞xa1 ♗d7** is just as lost. **23...♗xe4 24.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 25.♗xf6 25.♞xc4 ♞d1+ 26.♗h2 fxe5 27.♞xe5 c4** wins. **25...gxf6 26.♞xe4 ♞d1+ 27.♗h2 ♞d4 28.♞e2 ♗d7 29.g4 c4 30.♞c2 ♗d6** White's passive pieces are no match for the well-coordinated Black king, rook and c-pawn. So White resigned, Zamarbide Ibarrea-Radulski, Andorra la Vella 2002.

I hope you will enjoy playing 5...♖e7 or 5...♗c6 in your next game!

CHAPTER 11

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Nimzo-Indian Vitolinsh Gambit



Let's play ...b5!

One of the most reliable openings for Black is the Nimzo-Indian. Nimzowitsch's concept has a strong positional basis – with Black concentrating on the central squares (e4 and d5). He is ready to give up his bishop for a knight to achieve his aim (and double White's pawns in the process).

What happens if an aggressive tactical player like Alvis Vitolinsh plays the Nimzo-Indian? Does he play like other chess players? Or is he able to make his mark on this solid opening? Clearly, as this is a chapter in an SOS-book, the last question may be answered in the affirmative.

Alvis Vitolinsh was in the habit of playing an early ...b5 in several lines of the Nimzo. In

one particular line (4.♞c2 0-0 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.♞xc3 b5!?) his idea has stood up to the test.

While this is not the absolute main line against 4.♞c2, his line has been played by such players as: Adams, Nikolic, Adorjan, Iordachescu, and Anand, to name but a few of the grandmasters involved.

This article will provide a theoretical survey of 6...b5, but we will start with a few games from Vitolinsh in other Nimzo-Indian's:

- Agafonov-Vitolinsh, Riga 1980
- Romanishin-Vitolinsh, Riga 1981
- Zagorskis-Vitolinsh, Frunze 1989
- Gavrikov-Vitolinsh, Severodonetsk 1982

□ Nikolay Agafonov

■ Alvis Vitolinsh

Riga 1980

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.e3 0-0
5.♗e2

Reshevsky's line which has a solid reputation. Vitolinsh stirs things up by playing 5...b5 – a move that he had also played two years previously against the same opponent (with success).

5...b5!?



6.cxb5 a6

Mind you, Vitolinsh's ...b5 plan increases Black's control over the e4- and d5-squares albeit at the cost of a pawn.

7.bxa6

Just like in the Volga gambit, White should wonder whether he wants to go all the way – developing Black's bishop in the process.

Two years before Agafonov had tried 7.♗d2 ♙b7 8.a3 (8.bxa6 ♗xa6) 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♗c4 11.♗c3 ♗xd2 12.♗xd2 ♗h4!?. (White has lost time, and has difficulty developing his kingside. Vitolinsh has fair compensation for the pawn) 13.h3 d6 14.♗g1!?. c5 15.g3 ♗f6 16.♗g2 ♗xg2 17.♗xg2 ♗c6 (clearly, White has problems with his king) 18.dxc5 ♗e5 19.♗e2 ♗f3+ 20.♗f1 dxc5 21.g4 ♗h4 22.g5 ♗e7 23.♗g4 ♗g6 24.♗c4 ♗ab8 25.♗c1 e4 26.f4 ♗fc8

27.♗g2 ♗c7 and now White blundered with 28.b4? ♗xf4! and Black won in Agafonov-Vitolinsh, Riga 1978.

Strongest is 7.♗g3 when after 7...♙b7 (a later try by Vitolinsh was 7...d5 but White has a pleasant and safe edge after 8.♗d2 ♗bd7 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.a4! axb5 11.axb5 ♙b7 12.0-0 M.Gurevich-Vitolinsh, Jurmala 1985)



practice has seen:

– 8.f3 d5! 9.bxa6 ♗xa6 10.♗xa6 ♗xa6! 11.0-0 c5 (Black has sufficient compensation owing to his superior structure) 12.a3 cxd4! 13.exd4 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗c6 15.f4?! g6 16.f5 exf5 17.♗h6?! ♗e8 18.♗d3 ♗c8 19.c4 dxc4 20.♗xc4 ♗a5 21.♗xc8 ♗xc8 22.♗ac1 ♗c4 23.♗fel ♗xa3 and Black converted his extra pawn in V.Sherbakov-Vitolinsh, Beltsy 1979.

– 8.♗d3!?. ♗xg2 9.♗g1 ♙b7 10.e4 ♗c8 11.h4 g6!?. (Vitolinsh decides to give an exchange) 12.♗h6 ♗xh4 13.♗d2 (13.♗h1) 13...♗f6 14.e5 ♗h4 15.♗xf8 ♗xf8 16.♗e4 d5 17.exd6 ♗xc4 18.♗cxe4 cxd6 19.♗h1 ♗d8 20.bxa6 ♗xa6 21.♗f1 d5 Black has good compensation for the exchange. Vitolinsh later missed a win before the game ended in a draw. Utasi-Vitolinsh, Jurmala 1985.

– 8.♗d2 axb5 (Earlier Vitolinsh had tried 8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♗xg2 11.♗g1 ♗c6 12.♗h5 ♗xh5 13.♗xh5±

Gutman-Vitolinsh, USSR 1979) 9.♘b5 (9.♘b5 ♗xg2 10.♞g1 ♗b7) 9...♗e7 10.♙c3 c5 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♞c1 ♗a6 (to keep some play along the diagonal. The alternative is 12...d5) 13.a3 ♗e7 14.b4 ♙c7 15.♞b3 (White is probably a little better. Vitolinsh now uses his h-pawn to good effect) 15...h5! 16.h3 h4 17.♗ge2 e5 18.♗g1 d5 (Black's position is preferable now) 19.♙f3 d4 20.♙b5 and now, instead of 20...dxe3 (Petkevich-Vitolinsh, Riga 1985) 20...♙xb5 21.♗xb5 ♗e4 was stronger, since 22.0-0 fails to 22...♙xd2 23.♙xd2 dxe3 24.♞xc3 ♞d5 with a double attack.

7...♗xa6 8.♗g3

8.♗d2 c5 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♗e4 11.dxc5 ♗xe2 12.♗xe2 ♙c3 13.bxc3 ♞a5 14.0-0 ♞xc5 15.♞d4 ♞c8 16.a4 d5 17.♗b5 is better for White, as Black cannot take on c3 due to his weak back rank. Tverdokhlebov-Vitolinsh, Kaluga 1981.

8...♗xf1 9.♙xf1

White has got rid of the pressure along the diagonal, but this plan takes up a lot of time – see the upcoming manoeuvre ♗g3-e2.

9...c5 10.♗g3 ♞a5 11.♗e2 ♗e4 12.♗d2 ♙xd2 13.♞xd2 d5 14.0-0 ♙c6



15.b3?!

Or 15.a3 cxd4.

15...♞fc8 16.♞fc1 ♞c7?!

Stronger was 16...cxd4 17.exd4 ♗a3.

17.♞d3 17.a3! 17...♗a3! 18.♞d1 ♗b2 19.♞ab1 ♙b4

With his active counterplay Black preserves the balance.

20.♞b5 cxd4 21.♞xd4 ♞xb5 22.♙xb5 ♞c2 23.♞xb4 ♞xe2 24.a4 g5?! 25.♙d4

25.h4! was stronger.

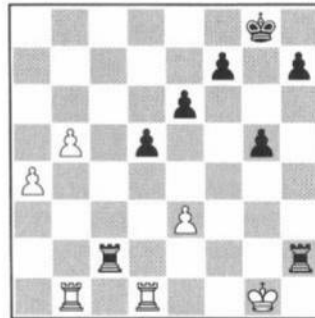
25...♗xd4 26.♞xd4 ♞c8

White has two connected passed pawns, but Black gets active play along the second rank. Good ingredients for an exciting finish in this double rook ending!

27.♞dd1 ♞cc2 28.b4?

This is a (losing) mistake. White must protect f2 with the passive 28.♞f1.

28...♞xf2 29.b5 ♞xg2+ 30.♙h1 ♞xh2+ 31.♙g1



31...♞cg2+

The players – presumably in time trouble – start repeating the moves. Vitolinsh misses the win with the typical method 31...h5! 32.b6 ♙g7 33.b7 and now the pawn drops after (33.a5 is too slow, as 33...♞cg2+ 34.♙f1 b4 mates) 33...♞cg2+ 34.♙f1 ♞d2! 35.♞xd2 ♞h1+ 36.♙e2 ♞xb1+.

32.♙f1 ♞a2 33.♙g1 ♞hg2+ 34.♙f1?

34.♙h1! and Black must find the win with 34...h5 as indicated above.

34...♞h2

34...♖af2+! 35.♗e1 ♜h2 36.b6 ♜a2 wins on the spot.

35.♗g1 ♜hg2+ 36.♗h1 ♜h2+ 37.♗g1
½-½

□ Oleg Romanishin
 ■ Alvis Vitolinsh
 Riga 1981

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.g3

Romanishin's own line, which was later developed – with impressive results – by Garry Kasparov.

4...c5 5.♗f3 b5



Objectively this cannot be recommended, but it demonstrates Vitolinsh's perseverance in playing this Volga-like plan.

6.cxb5 a6 7.♗g2

Most natural. Surprisingly, Vitolinsh was not deterred by the result of this game. Five years later he repeated his ...b5 experiment in this line. His daring play was rewarded this time, but the final result had nothing to do with the outcome of the opening:

7.dxc5 axb5 8.♗g2 ♗xc5 9.♗e5 d5 10.♗d3 ♗e7 11.♗xb5 ♗e4 (Black has certain compensation for the pawn in the form of his strong centre which restricts the fianchetto bishop) 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♗d4 0-0 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.♗c1 ♗b7 16.a3 ♗d7 17.b4 ♗fc8

(with Volga-like compensation for the pawn) 18.♗b3



18...♗xc1?! (18...♗c3! 19.♗d2 ♗f6 gives Black decent play) 19.♗xc1 ♗xd3 20.exd3 ♗d6 21.♗a5 ♗b5 22.♗c7 ♗c8 23.♗a7 ♗f5 24.♗c1! ♗xc1+ 25.♗xc1 ♗xd3 26.♗xd7 ♗d1+ 27.♗f1 ♗xc1 28.♗c6 ♗f8 and now White started to drift with 29.♗e5?! (instead 29.a4 was logical and strong. Black cannot create enough counterplay to stop White from pushing his a-pawn) 29...♗d6 30.♗d8 ♗c8 31.♗xc8 ♗xc8 White's endgame advantage – if it exists at all – is not too impressive. Vitolinsh later won an opposite-coloured bishop ending! Piskov-Vitolinsh, Lvov 1986.

7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 9.bxa6 ♗xa6 10.dxc5 ♗xc3

10...♗xc5 11.a3 and Black has not enough for the pawn.

11.bxc3 ♗e4

Here 11...♗c7 followed by 12...♗bd7 looks better.

12.♗c2 ♗d7?!

Stronger was 12...♗c7, now White has the annoying:

13.c6! ♗dc5 14.♗e3 ♗c7 15.♗d4 ♗c4

15...e5? 16.♗f5 wins material in view of the threat 17.f3.

16.♗fb1 ♗a6 17.♗b4 ♗d6 18.♗f3 ♗a5 19.♗e5 ♗d8 20.♗f4 ♗a6



21. Na**b1**

A pity! Romanishin could have won spectacularly with 21. Qxf7! Qxf7 (21... Wxf7 22. Qxd6 Qxd6 23. Nb8+--) 22. Wh7 and Black has no adequate defence against the threat of 23. Qe5 followed by a switch across the fourth rank. 22... Qce4 (22... Wxc6 23. Qxd6 Wxd6 24. Nf4+ Qe8 25. Wxg7 Qc8 26. Qf3+--) 23. Qe5 Qg8 24. Qxe4 dxe4 25. Wh5+ Qe7 26. Nab1 planning 27. Nb7. Instead of 21. Qxf7! the move 21.c4 is also strong.

21...f6 22. Qd**3 Q**ce**4 23. Q**e**3**

The threat of 24. Qb6 forces Black into passivity.

23...Qc8 24. Qxe**4 d**xe**4 25. Q**c**5 W**xc**6 26. W**xe**4 Q**xe**4 27. N**xe**4 N**a**2 28. Q**a**6**

Less clear is 28. Qxe6 Qe8 29. Qe5 Qxe4 30. Qxe4 Qxe2! in view of 31. Nb8?! Qf3! 32. Nxc8+ Qf7 33. Qc7+ Qg6 34. Qd2 Qa1+ 35. Qf1 Qe2 and Black regains the piece with clear drawing chances.

28...Nxa6 29. Nb**8 Q**c**6 30. c**4** Q**f**7 31. N**b**7+ Q**e**7 32. c**5** e**5** 33. f**4** Q**e**6 34. f**xe**5 Q**d**1+ 35. Q**g**2 f**xe**5 36. N**a**4**

White is better, but the win is not elementary. Vitolinsh's next is a blunder.

36...h5? 37. Qg**5 Q**c**8 38. N**xg**7 N**xc**5 39. e**4**!**

Suddenly Black's king is under attack.

39...Qc2+ 40. Qh**3 Q**d**6? 41. N**aa**7! 1-0**

□ **A. Zagorskis**
 ■ **Alvis Vitolinsh**
 Frunze 1989

1. d4** Q**f**6 2. c**4** e**6** 3. Q**c**3 Q**b**4 4. W**c**2**

The classical variation. You know by now what recipe Vitolinsh has in store:

4...b5!?



It is interesting that this is how Vitolinsh met 4. Wc2 in later years. In 1982 he 'invented' 4...0-0 5. a3 Qxc3+ 6. Wxc3 b5 (and played it with success against Gavrikov, see the next game) which is by far the most healthy of his ...b5 concepts. Perhaps he simply did not want to play as other people did?

In Mikhailchishin-Vitolinsh, Riga 1975, there followed 4...0-0 5. Qf3 (less popular than 5.a3) 5...b5 6. cxb5 a6 7. e3 Qb7 8. bxa6 (8. Qd2± I. Sokolov) 8...Qxa6 9. Qe2 c5 10. 0-0 exd4 11. exd4 W a5 12. Qd2 Qf8 13. a3 Qxc3 14. bxc3 (14. Qxc3 was not bad at all) 14...Qe4 15. Qd3 Qxf3 16. gxf3 Wh5 17. Wd1 e5 18. Qe1 exd4 19. cxd4 Wd5 20. Qf4 d6 21. Qe4 and White retained the advantage, although the game later ended in a draw.

5. cx**b5 a**6** 6. b**x**a6**

Matsukevich has recommended 6.e3 axb5 (6... Qb7!?) 7. Qxb5 Qb7 8. Qf3 as slightly better for White. Practice also saw 6. Qd2 Qb7 7.e3 0-0 8. Qf3 (± according to Ivan

Sokolov) 8...axb5 9.♗xb5 ♖a6 10.♗e2 ♗e4 11.♖d1 c5 12.0-0 cxd4 13.♗fxd4 and there is no compensation for the pawn. Dydyshko-Vitolinsh, Minsk 1988.

6...♗xa6 7.♗f3 0-0 8.g3

More interesting is 8.e4.

8...d5 9.♗g2

9.e3 should have been considered.

9...♗bd7 10.0-0 c5

Stronger than the earlier effort: 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♞e1 ♖a5 13.♗d2 ♗e4 14.c4!? ♗xd2 15.♗xd2 cxd4 16.cxd5 ♞fc8 17.♖d1 e5 18.♗b3 ♖c7 19.f4!? with the better game for White. Kakageldiev-Vitolinsh, Kaluga 1981. The actual move order in this game was 4.♖c2 0-0 5.♗f3 b5 6.cxb5 a6 7.bxa6 ♗xa6 and so on.

11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♗f4 ♖e7



Black has definite compensation for the pawn.

13.♞ad1 ♞fc8 14.♗e5 ♗b6 15.♗d3 ♗d4

Black has very strong pressure. His game is already preferable.

16.♗d2 ♗e4 17.♗e1 ♗a4?

This gives White a (tactical) chance to come back into the game. Correct was 17...♗xc3 18.♗xc3 (18.bxc3 ♗f6 is also better for Black) 18...♗xc3 19.bxc3 ♖f6 and only Black can win. Or even 19...♗a4 20.♖xa4 ♗xd3 21.♖g4 ♗c2.

18.♗xe4

Much better was 18.♗xd5 exd5 19.♖xa4 ♗xd3 20.♖xd4 ♗xe2 21.♗b4.

18...dxe4 19.♖xa4? 19.♗f4! 19...exd3 20.exd3

The alternatives are 20.♖xd4 dxe2 21.♗xe2 ♗xe2 22.♗c3 ♖g5 and 20.♞xd3 ♗c4! 21.♖d1 ♗xd3 22.♖xd3 ♞d8.

20...e5 21.♖c2 ♗b7 22.♖e2 ♖d7



White will be killed along the main diagonal.

23.♗e4 f5

and White resigned.

□ Viktor Gavrikov

■ Alvis Vitolinsh

Severodonetsk 1982

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.♖c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♖xc3 b5!?

Objectively the best application of any of the ...b5 ideas by the Latvian genius. Black's main concept is the break-up of White's centre, control of the light squares d5 and c4, plus the acceleration of his own development. Perhaps the pawn sacrifice looks less convincing than, say, in the Volga/Benko Gambit. However, of primary importance here is the change in the course of the play, which is rather uncomfortable for White.

7.cxb5

It is also possible to decline the gambit, but usually the exchange of the b-pawn for the more central c4-pawn is theoretically more advantageous to Black.

Here are some examples.

– 7.e3 bxc4 8.♗xc4 a5 9.♞e2 ♗a6! 10.♞xa5 c5! 11.♞xd8 ♜xd8 12.♗xa6 ♞xa6 13.♞b1 ♞db8 with pressure for the pawn, Barsov-Moreno, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

– 7.♞f3 ♞c6! 8.cxb5 ♞xd4 9.♞d3 c5 10.e3 ♞f5 11.e4 ♞d4 12.e5 ♞d5 13.♞f3 ♞xf3+ 14.♞xf3 ♗b7 15.♞g3 f5! with an excellent game, Forintos-Zsinka, Budapest 1993.

– 7.c5 ♞d5 (7...♗b7 is also possible) 8.♞c2 ♗b7 (8...f5!?) 9.♞h3 (9.e4 is nevertheless stronger) 9...f5 10.f3 ♞h4+ 11.g3 ♞e7 12.♗g2 ♞f6 13.0-0 ♞c6 14.e3 d6 15.♞b3 a6 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♞f4 ♞d8 18.♗d2 g5 with a complicated game, Schandorff-Sammalvuo, Copenhagen 1998.

7...a6

This is Vitolinsh's favourite method.

Less good is 7...♞d5 8.♞c2 f5 9.♞f3 c6 10.a4 ♗b7 11.e3 cxb5 12.♗xb5 ♞f6 13.0-0 ♞g6 14.♗c2 ♞c6 15.♗d2 ♞f6 16.♞fc1 ♞f8 17.♞b3 ♗a8 18.♞a3! ♞f7 19.b4 and Black's attack has not got going, whereas White is still a pawn up, Gelfand-Adams, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

The main line nowadays is 7...c6, which we will investigate in a theoretical survey below.



8.e3

It also makes sense to develop the bishop outside the pawn chain with 8.♗g5.

8...d6!?

As we have seen Vitolinsh usually played 8...axb5 in such positions.

9.♞f3 ♗b7 10.bxa6

White takes on a6 now that Black has developed his bishop to b7.

10...♞xa6 11.♗e2 c5

As in all these ...b5 lines one of the main arguments in favour for Black is his dominance in the centre.

12.0-0 ♞c8

Black has completed his development, and is not doing so badly.

13.♗d2 cxd4 14.♞xd4 ♞c5 15.♞h4?!

The queen is misplaced here, but is takes a wonderfully creative manoeuvre to demonstrate this. Stronger is 15.♞ad1.

15...♞ce4 16.♗c1?! ♞c5!



A fantastic move – preparing (out of nothing) the attack that follows in the game.

17.♞d4 g5! 18.♞h3 g4

Absolutely forcing White to open the g-file.

19.♗xg4 ♞xg4 20.♞xg4+ ♞g5 21.♞h3 ♞h8

To double rooks after which all of Black's pieces will contribute to the kingside attack. Note that the balance has not yet been upset.

22.f3 ♞fg8 23.g4?

White should have resigned himself to 23.fxe4 ♖xg2+ 24.♗xg2 ♜xg2+ 25.♕xg2 ♗g5+ 26.♕f2 ♗h4+ and since White cannot flee with 27.♕e2 the game ends in a perpetual.

23...♜5g6! 24.♗h5 ♕f6 25.♗b5 ♕xg4! 26.fxg4 ♗h4

White resigned, mate cannot be avoided. A wonderful game by Vitolinsh.

By now you should be fully inspired by Vitolinsh's play. We will now investigate the theoretical consequences of his 6...b5!? against the Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♕c3 ♖b4 4.♗c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♗xc3 b5 7.cxb5 c6



The lines now fork:

- A) 8.e3
- B) 8.a4
- C) 8.bxc6
- D) 8.♗g5
- E) 8.f3

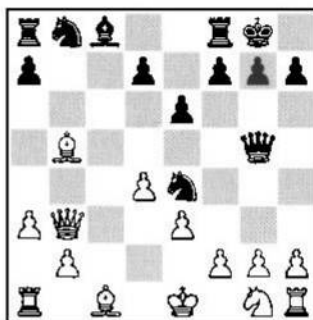
Variation A

8.e3 cxb5 9.♗xb5 ♕e4 10.♗b3

After 10.♗d3 ♕d6 11.♕e2 ♖b7 12.♕c3 ♗g5 13.♜g1 ♜c8 14.♗a4 ♗h4 15.h3 a5! 16.♗e2 ♕c6 17.♗g4 ♗e7 the game is unclear, Shipov-Rashkovsky, Moscow 2002.

10...♗g5

Another possibility is 10...♗a6 11.♗a4 ♗g5 12.♗f1 ♗xf1 13.♕xf1 ♕c6 14.f3 ♕d6 15.♕e2 ♜ab8 16.e4 ♗e7 17.h4 f5 and the weakening of White's king position gives Black good chances, Vladimirov-Dizdar, Abu Dhabi 2001.



11.♗f1 ♕c6 12.♗c2

Or 12.♕f3 ♗g6 13.g3 ♜b8 14.♗d3 ♗f5! 15.♗c2 ♜b6! 16.0-0 ♗a6 17.♗d1 ♗xe2 18.♗xe2 ♜c8 19.♕e1 ♗a5 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, Baburin-Adams, Kilkenny 1999.

12...f5 13.♕h3 ♗d8 14.b4 ♖b7 15.f3 ♜c8! 16.♗b2 ♕f6 17.♗d3 ♗b6 18.0-0 ♗a6

and Black has gained compensation for the pawn, Van Wely-Nikolic, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

Variation B

8.a4 a6

Interesting is 8...♗b7!?

9.bxa6

After 9.♗g5 axb5 10.a5 ♗a6 11.♕f3 c5! 12.dxc5 ♕e4 13.♗xd8 ♕xc3 14.♗b6 ♗a4 15.e3 ♕6xc5 16.♗xc5 ♕xc5 17.b4 ♗a6 18.♜b1 ♖b7 the game is equal, Anastasian-Dizdar, Gothenburg 2005.

9...♕e4

9...♕xa6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♕f3

c5 13.e3 ♖b7 with compensation, Granda-A.Rodriguez, Villa Martelli 2005.

10.♟c2 d5 11.e3 ♘xa6 12.♙xa6

If 12...♙d2, then 12...c5! is strong.

12...♙xa6 13.♙e2



**13...c5! 14.dxc5 ♖a5+ 15.♙d2 ♗xd2
16.♟xd2 ♟xc5 17.0-0**

and here in the game Van Wely-Iordachescu, Siliuri 2003, Black would have done best to fight for a draw by 17...♙xe2 18.♟xe2 ♟b4.

Variation C

8.bxc6 ♗xc6 9.b4!?

Practice has also seen:

– 9.♙g5 ♖b7 10.♗f3 ♜c8 11.♟d3 ♟b6!
12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.e3 ♟xb2! 14.♞b1 ♟a2
15.♙d2 (15.♞xb7 ♗b4! intending 16...♞c1)
15...♙a5 16.♟b5 Forintos-Dizdar, London
1983, and now strongest is 16...♞c2 17.♙d3
♞xd2 18.♙xh7+ ♗g7.

– 9.♗f3 ♙a6!? 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙xf6 ♟xf6
12.e3 ♙f1 13.♙xf1 ♞fc8 14.♟d2 e5 15.d5
♙e7 16.e4 ♞c4 17.♟e2 ♞ac8 with quite
good compensation, M.Bensdorp-Van Eijk,
Dieren 2003.

– 9.e3 ♖b7 10.b3 ♞c8 11.♟b2 ♟b6 12.♗f3
♙a5 13.♙d2 ♙e4 14.♙c4 ♞xc4! 15.♙xc4
d5 16.♙d3 ♗xb3!, Elbilila-Ashley, Bermuda
1999, and now if 17.♞b1 there is 17...♟a5+
18.♙f1 ♙xc1 19.♟xc1.

9...♙a6!

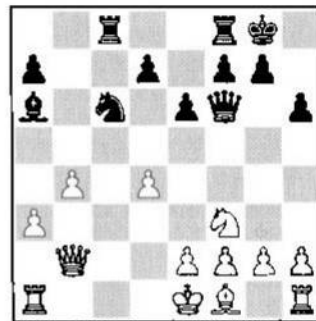
Weaker is 9...♙b7 10.♗f3 ♞c8 11.♟b2 ♙e7
12.e3 ♙e4 13.♙d2 ♟b6 14.♙e5 ♞c2
15.♟b3 ♞fc8, Kouatly-Stangl, Augsburg
1988, and here 16.♙c4! gives White an advantage.

10.♙g5

After 10.e3 ♙xf1 11.♙xf1 ♞c8 Black has a lead in development.

10...h6 11.♙xf6 ♟xf6 12.♗f3 ♞ac8

13.♟b2



13...♞c7! 14.e3

After 14.b5 ♙xb5 15.♟xb5 ♗xd4 Black has a strong attack.

14...♙xf1 15.♙xf1 ♞fc8 16.♙e2

If 16.♞c1 there is 16...♟g6!.

16...♙a5 17.♞hc1 ♙c4 18.♟c3

If 18.♟b3, then 18...e5! is strong.

18...e5 19.♟d3

After 19.dxe5 ♙xe5 20.♟b2! the game is equal.

19...d6 20.♙d2

After 20.d5 ♙b2 21.♞xc7 ♞xc7 22.♟d2 ♟g6! Black has threats.

20...♙xd2 21.♟xd2 exd4 22.exd4

♞xc1 23.♞xc1 ♞xc1 24.♟xc1 ♟xd4

25.♟c8+ ♙h7 26.♟f5+ ♙g8

Draw, Polugaevsky-Dzindzichashvili, Reykjavik 1990.

Variation D

8.♙g5 cxb5 9.e3 ♖b7 10.f3

This gives slightly more chances than

10.♟f3, after which Black can attack either bishop with satisfactory play:

– 10...h6 11.♙h4 (or 11.♙xf6 ♜xf6 12.♞c1 ♝a6! 13.♙xb5 ♞ac8 14.♜d2 ♜g6 15.♙e2 ♞xc1+ 16.♜xc1 ♞c8 with an excellent game, Olafsson-Seirawan, Reykjavik 1990) 11...g5 12.♙g3 ♝e4 13.♜c7 ♜xc7 14.♙xc7 ♞c8 15.♙xb8 ♞axb8 and Black has a quite splendid endgame, Zaiats-N.Kosintseva, Samara 2005.

– 10...a6 11.♙e2 ♝c6 12.0-0 ♝e4 13.♜xc6 ♙xc6 14.♙xd8 ♞fxd8 and White has altogether no chance of an advantage, Bareev-Anand, Monaco blindfold 2005.

10...a6

Also good is 10...h6 11.♙xf6 ♜xf6 12.♝h3 ♞c8 13.♜d2 a6 14.♙d3 d6 15.0-0 ♝d7 16.♞ad1, Kramnik-Adams, Dortmund 1998, and after 16...♜e7 or 16...♝b6 Black has nothing to fear.

11.♙d3

But not 11.♙xf6 ♜xf6 12.♜c7 ♜d8! 13.♜xb7 ♝c6 14.♙xb5 ♜a5+ 15.♝f1 ♞a7 16.b4 ♜xb5+ and Black is better.

11...♝c6 12.♝h3

The other knight route 12.♝e2 h6 13.♙h4 ♞c8 14.0-0! ♝e5 15.♜d2 ♝c4 also gives White nothing.

12...h6



13.♙xf6

After 13.♙h4 ♝d5! 14.♙xd8 ♝xc3 15.♙h4

♝d5 16.e4 ♝b6 17.♙f2 d5! 18.e5 b4! Black has an excellent game.

13...♜xf6 14.0-0 ♞ac8 15.♜d2 e5! 16.d5

16.dxe5 ♝xe5 17.♝f4 d5! 18.♞ac1 ♝c4 19.♙xc4 dxc4 is somewhat better for Black.

16...♝e7

16...♝b8!?

17.e4

Or 17.d6 ♝g6 18.♙e4 ♙xe4 19.fxe4 ♜e6!.

17...♜b6+ 18.♜f2

If 18.♝h1, then 18... f5! is strong.

18...♜d6!

The endgame would favour White.

19.♞ac1 f5 20.♜e3

Or 20.♜a7 ♞c7!.

20...♞xc1 21.♞xc1 fxe4 22.fxe4 ♞c8 23.♝f2 b4?!

23...♞xc1+!? 24.♜xc1 ♜b6! with equal play was somewhat more accurate.

24.♞xc8+

24.♙e2!.

24...♝xc8 25.♙f1 bxa3 26.bxa3 ♜b6 27.♜xb6 ♝xb6 28.♝d3 d6 29.♝b2

Unclear is 29.♝b4 a5 30.♝c6 ♙xc6 31.dxc6 ♝f7.

29...♝f7 30.♝f2 ♝e7 31.♝e3 ♝d8 32.♝d2 ♝c7 33.♝e3

Draw, Morovic-Iordachescu, Tripoli 2004.

Variation E

8.f3!

Obviously best – White tries to set up a strong centre and is not interested in material. In the event of 8...cxb5 9.e4 a6 10.♙d3 (or 10.♙e3!?) 10...♝c6 11.♝e2 ♙b7 12.♙c2! (also good is 12.b3 ♞c8 13.♜b2 with advantage to White) 12...d6. Golod now recommends 13.♙e3 which retains an advantage.

8...♝d5

Evidently the right continuation. Black does not have to fear 9.♜d2 f5 10.♝h3 (or 10.c3

cxb5 11. ♗xb5 ♜xe3! ♞) 10...cxb5 11.e3
 (11.e4 fxe4 12.fxe4 ♜f6 13.♗d3 ♗b7 with
 counterplay) 11...♜c6! 12.♗xb5 ♜a5
 13.♞d3 ♞b8 14.b4 ♞xb5! 15.bxa5 ♗a6 with
 an excellent game for Black – or 15.♞xb5
 ♜b3 16.♞b1 ♞h4+ 17.♜f2 ♜xc1 18.♞xc1
 ♜xe3.

9. ♞d3 f5!?

Play is very sharp after 9...cxb5 10.e4 ♜e7
 (weaker is 10...♜b6 11.♜h3 ♚, or 10...♜c7
 11.♜h3 ♚) 11.♜h3 ♜bc6 12.♗e3 d5 13.♞d1
 e5!.

10.e4

First 10.♜h3 cxb5 11.e4 is also interesting.



10...♜b6

Interesting is 10...♜c7 11.♜h3 ♜xb5
 12.♗e3 ♗a6 13.♞c2 Kiriakov-Wells,
 Hastings 2001/02, and here 13...♞a5+
 14.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 15.♜xd2 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♜d6
 17.♗d3 when White is slightly better.

11.exf5

Black was all right after 11.♜h3 cxb5
 12.♗g5 ♞e8 13.♗f4! d5! 14.exf5 ♜c6!
 15.♞e3 e5! Bu-Motylev, Moscow 2004. Or
 15...♜c4! 16.♗xc4 bxc4 with equality.

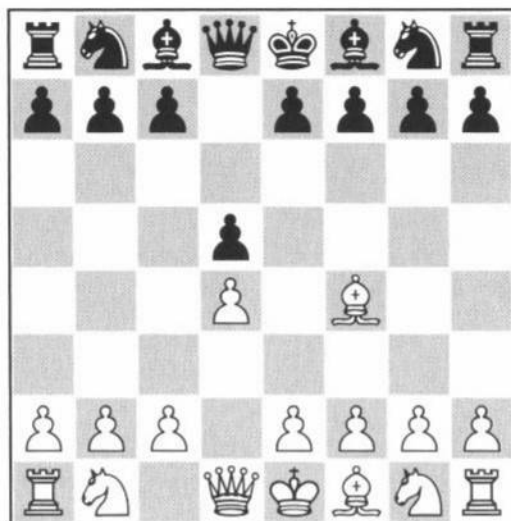
11...♞xf5 12.♞e4 cxb5 13.♗d3 ♜d5
14.♞g4 ♞f8 15.♗h6 ♞f7 16.♗g5
♞a5+ 17.♗d2 ♞b6 18.♞h4 h6
19.♜e2

With somewhat the better game, Miles-
 D.Gurevich, New York 1989.

CHAPTER 12

Mark van der Werf

Bishop First: 1.d4 d5 2.♖f4



The Improved London System

The London System, characterized by the moves d4, ♗f3 and ♖f4 is generally known as a solid choice for White. It is possible against virtually every Black set-up. It is therefore popular among players who do not want to spend much time on opening preparation.

Recently an aggressive variation of the London System has come into focus against 1...d5. In this variation White delays the development of the king's knight and plays 2.♖f4, which has some advantages compared to 2.♗f3.

1. White can move his queen into an attacking position on the kingside more easily.
2. After swapping the dark-squared bishops White can gain space with f4 directly.

3. White can react more adequately to an early queenside initiative by Black, which involves ...♗b6 in combination with ...c6 or ...c5.

In the past the Croatian grandmaster Vlatko Kovacevic has played the London System consistently with lots of success. In 2005 he wrote a comprehensive book about the London System together with Norwegian Sverre Johnsen. Grandmasters Luc Winants and Jonathan Rowson are currently making many interesting contributions to the theory of 2.♖f4. Their games show that the London System often leads to adventurous positions in which both White and Black can have their share of fun.

This chapter is divided into three sections which contain one or more illustrative games. In Section I Black reacts with ...c5 and tries to attack White's queenside, which is deserted by the bishop. Section II deals with the Slav set-up by Black with ...c6. Finally, in Section III Black plays an early ...e6 leading to a classical Queen's Gambit set-up.

I. Black plays ...c5

An early 2...c5 is the most critical reply by Black. White can react with the solid 3.e3 or sacrifice a pawn with 3.e4 to go into an Albin Counter-Gambit with an extra tempo. We will start with the latter and see some wild and unusual positions.

□ Luke McShane
 ■ Miguel Illescas Cordoba
 Gothenburg 2005

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e4



3...dxe4

If Black does not want to get involved in an Albin Counter-Gambit with a tempo less, he has some alternatives:

– 3...cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♘c6 5.♖xd5 ♖xd5 6.exd5 ♗b4 is not an equalizer after 7.♗a3 ♗xd5 8.0-0-0! e6 9.♗b5+ ♖e7 10.♗g3.

– With 3...♗f6 Black can get a solid position as long as he answers 4.e5 with 4...♗fd7 (but not 4...♗g8 5.dxc5 e6 6.♗d2 ♗xc5 7.♗b3 ♗b6 8.♖g4 which gave White a pleasant advantage in the game Laurent-Savchenko, Metz 2005). White's only try for the initiative would be 5.e6 fxe6 6.♗f3 but I don't think he will have enough compensation. Instead of 4.e5 White can also play 4.♗c3 which is more in the spirit of the variation. After 4...♗xe4 5.♗xe4 dxe4 6.dxc5 a sharp position arises with chances for both sides.

– Another way to meet 3.e4 is 3...♗c6. The classic example is the correspondence game Bischoff-Estes from 1945 which continued with 4.♗c3 exd4 5.exd5 dxc3 6.dxc6 ♖a5? (much better is 6...♖xd1+ 7.♗xd1 bxc6 and Black is in good shape. He can counter the naive looking 8.♗c7 with 8...e6 9.bxc3 ♗e7 and after completing his development, Black has a superior pawn structure) 7.b4 ♖xb4 8.♖d5 ♗e6 9.♖f3 0-0-0 10.cxb7+ and Black resigned because of 10...♖xb7 11.♗a6. Because 4.♗c3 does not lead to advantage, White tried 4.exd5 ♖xd5 5.♗c3 in the game Rowson-Stojanovic, Verona 2006, when 5...♖f5



– 6.♖d2? led to trouble after 6...cxd4 7.♗b5 e5 8.♗c7+ ♖d8 9.♗xa8 exf4 10.0-0-0 ♗e6 because ♗a8 is doomed.

– The game Winants-Van der Werf, Netherlands tt 2005/06, featured the better try 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.♘b5 ♗d7 8.♙xd4 but Black should have gotten an equal position with 8...♖a5+ instead of 8...♙xd4.

– White's best move is probably 6.♗g3!. He has enough compensation after 6...♙xd4 (or 6...♖e6+ 7.♙ge2 ♙xd4 8.♖d2 g6 9.0-0-0 ♗h6 10.♗f4) 7.♗d3 ♖e6+ 8.♙ge2.

4.d5 ♙f6

4...♖b6 is a forcing alternative, but it is risky and probably unwise to go after b2 if you are already a centre pawn up. After 5.♙c3 ♖xb2 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♙xd7 8.♙ge2 ♖b6 9.0-0 White's compensation is obvious.

5.♙c3 a6

This move is popular among grandmasters, probably because they don't want to be disturbed by ♙b5. However, the alternative 5...g6 looks healthy enough. After 6.♖d2 (6.♙b5!? ♙a6 7.d6 ♗g4 8.f3 exf3 9.gxf3 led to victory in an antique simultaneous exhibition game by Spielmann, but should be unsuccessful after 9...♗e6 10.♖d2 ♗g7. Instead of 8.f3 White can improve with 8.♗e2 after which he has compensation) 6...♗g7 7.0-0-0 8.♗h6 and White has some typical 'Albin' compensation for the pawn. Also 8.f3 exf3 9.♙xf3 gives White compensation.

6.♖e2

Again the most popular move. The natural alternative to prevent b5 is 6.a4 which leads to positions where White can claim compensation, for instance: 6...g6 7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.♙ge2 (better than 8.f3 ♖b6! 9.♖b1 ♖b4 and Black has a pawn plus the initiative) 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♙bd7 10.♙g3 ♙b6 11.♗a2 c4 12.d6. Note that square a2 is available for the bishop because of the a6-a4-intermezzo.

6...g6

In this game Black uses a logical developing scheme. Inferior alternatives are:

– 6...♗f5 7.0-0-0 ♙bd7 8.h3 ♖b6 9.g4 ♗g6 10.f3 e5 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.fxe4 e5 13.♗h2

and White won quite easily in Winants-Korneev, Warsaw Ech 2005.

– 6...e6 7.0-0-0 ♖a5 which was played a few days later by Tregubov against Winants and Black gained a slight advantage after 8.d6?! (better is 8.f3 ♗e7 9.fxe4 0-0 10.♙f3 with some advantage for White) 8...♙c6 9.♙b1 e5 10.♗d2 ♙d4 11.♖e1 ♖b6 12.♗g5 ♗e6 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♙xe4.

– 6...♗g4, a strange move which was played in Goossens-Purnama, Barcelona 2005. White should have reacted with 7.f3 exf3 8.gxf3 ♗f5 9.0-0-0 g6 10.♙e4! with advantage for White.

– 6...♙xd5 7.0-0-0 e6 8.♖xe4, which is probably the worst possibility. After for example 8...♗e7 9.♙xd5 exd5 10.♖xd5 ♖a5 11.♗c4 ♗e6 12.♖e5 ♙c6 13.♖xe6 fxe6 14.♖xe6 White has a more than pleasant initiative.



7.0-0-0 ♗g7 8.♙xe4 ♙xe4 9.♖xe4 0-0 10.♗c4?!

White is forced to take this one back soon.

10...♗f5

The immediate 10...b5 11.d6 ♖a7 12.♗g5 gives White some advantage.

11.♖f3 b5 12.♗f1

Now 12.d6 is no good, because after 12...bxc4 13.♖xa8 ♖b6 14.c3 ♙c6 Black wins the White queen. White seems to be in trouble. After 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♖xd3 ♖a5

14.a3 ♘d7 Black has attacking chances, but it might be better than the game.

12...♗a5 13.g4

Forced, because 13.♖b1 ♗b4 14.b3 c4 give Black a strong attack.

13...♗xa2

Spectacular but unnecessary. 13...♗c8! is a nice echo of 12.♗f1 and looks powerful after 14.a3 ♗b7 15.♗g2 ♘d7 followed by ♘b6-c4.

14.gxf5 ♗xb2+ 15.♖d2 ♘d7

After 15...♗b4+ 16.♖e2 Black can force a draw with ♗c4+ or play for a win with 16...a5.

16.♘e2 ♘b6 17.♗b3 ♗f6

17...♘d5 18.♗xb2 ♗xb2 19.fxg6 hxg6 looks like a better option. Now White gradually improves his position.

18.♖e1 ♗xf5 19.♗h3 ♗f6 20.♗g1 ♘c4 21.♗g3 ♘b2 22.♗b1 ♘c4 23.♗d1 ♘b2 24.♗b1 ♘c4 25.♗g2



That is a bold decision. White refuses a draw by repetition and is soon rewarded for his courage.

25...♗ad8 26.h4 h6 27.h5 g5?

Necessary was 27...e6 to create some space for the queen. Now Black loses the exchange by force.

28.♗c7 ♗d6

28...♗de8 29.♗f3 traps the queen!

29.♗xd6 exd6 30.♗f3 ♗d8 31.♗f5

♗e8 32.♗e4 ♖f8 33.♗f3 ♗a5+ 34.c3 ♘e5 35.♗e3 ♘c4 36.♗f3 ♘e5 37.♗g3 ♗a2 38.f4

The decisive breakthrough.

38...gxf4 39.♗xf4 ♗c4 40.♖f2 ♘d7 41.♗xg7 ♖xg7 42.♗g1+

Black gets mated.

As mentioned earlier, White does not have to go into these kinds of complications. Instead he can play 3.e3, after which Black's main reactions are 3...♗b6, 3...♘c6 and 3...♘f6. The next game features ...♘c6 and is another example of the sharp positions that the Improved London System can produce.

□ Anthony Miles

■ Ara Minasian

Ohrid 2001

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6

3...♗b6 is the most aggressive approach, because White does not have ♗b3 at his disposal. But he has an interesting option, which is also possible in other variations, if White does not play an early c3. 4.♘c3 e6 5.♘b5 ♘a6 6.a4.



It will be difficult for Black to activate his queenside from this position. In the game Polyakova-Kachkina, Protvino 2001, Black

used the most direct method, but was unsuccessful: 6...c4 7.c3 ♖d7 (temporarily winning a pawn, but White will regain it easily) 8.b3 ♖xb5 9.axb5 ♜xb5 10.bxc4 dxc4 11.♞a4 ♞xa4 12.♞xa4 ♖f6 13.♖xc4 ♖d5 14.♖xd5 cxd5 15.♖f3 and White kept the queenside under pressure with ♖d2 and ♞b1.

4.c3 ♞b6 5.♞b3 c4 6.♞c2 ♖f5

With knights on f3 and f6 this is a strong move, but now it is dubious, because pawn d5 drops off.

7.♞xf5!

7.♞c1 ♖f6 8.♖d2 e6 9.♖gf3 is not the way to get an opening advantage.

7...♞xb2 8.♞xd5



8...♞c1+

Critical is 8...♞xa1 because White's king is much worse on e1. After 9.♞b5 a6 (after 9...0-0-0 10.♖xc4 e5 11.♖e2 exf4 12.0-0 Black's queen will drop off) 10.♞xb7 ♖d8 11.♞e4! (11.♞xa8 ♞xb1+ 12.♖c2 e5 13.♖xe5 ♞d3+ 14.♖f3 ♞xf1 15.♖c7 ♖e7 16.♖xd8 ♖xd8 17.♞c6+ is only a draw) 11...♞c8 (11...♞b2 12.♖xc4 ♞c1+ 13.♖e2 also favours White) 12.♞c2 ♖f6 13.♖f3 ♖d5 14.♖d2 followed by ♖xc4 and 0-0, after which White has an overwhelming advantage. He already has two pawns for the exchange and Black's queen is still in trouble.

9.♖e2 ♞b2+ 10.♖f3 ♖f6

10...♞xa1 11.♖xc4 e6 12.♞b5 0-0-0 13.♖e2 does not help either.

11.♞xc4 ♞xa1 12.♞b3 0-0-0 13.♖b5
White is going to play ♖c2, ♞c1 and ♖d2. Therefore Black tries to confuse matters, but Miles decides the game quickly.

13...♖a5 14.♞c2 a6 15.♖d3 e5 16.♖xe5 ♖d7 17.♖f4 ♖e7 18.♖h3 g5 19.♖xg5 1-0

In the following game Black combines ...c5 with ...♖f6 and ...♖c6. It results in a much quieter game and may be Black's safest method.

□ **Witalis Sapis**

■ **Oleg Korneev**

Cappelle la Grande 2004

1.d4 d5 2.♖f4 c5

Note that 2...♖f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♖c6 is a more forcing move order which rules out 3.e4

3.e3 ♖c6 4.c3

The alternative 4.♖f3 ♖f6 5.♖c3 ♖g4 6.♖e2 e6 7.0-0 ♖e7 8.h3 ♖h5 9.♖e5 ♖xe2 10.♞xc2 gave equal play in the game V. Kovacevic-Doric, Rabac 2004.

Note that in this chapter I will concentrate on postponing ♖f3 for as long as possible for the reasons outlined above.

4...♖f6 5.♖d2

After 5.♖f3 ♞b6 6.♞b3 c4 7.♞c2 ♖f5 Black already is slightly better due to his space advantage.

5...♖f5

Black immediately occupies the important b1-h7 diagonal. The text move looks better than the alternatives 5...♞b6 6.♞b3 c4 7.♞c2 g6 8.e4 and 5...cxd4 6.exd4 ♖f5 7.♞b3 ♞c8 8.♖gf3 e6 9.♖e2. In both cases the game is fairly equal but somehow White's position seems easier to play.

6.♗g3

6.♗b3 invites Black to play on the queenside. The position after 6...♗c8 7.♗g3 c4 8.♗d1 h6 is still equal however.

6...e6

Perhaps White can claim a small advantage after 6...♗b6 7.♗h4 ♗d7 8.♗b3 intending 8...c4 9.♗c2.

7.♗b3 ♗c8

7...♗b6 8.♗xb6 axb6 9.♗b5 ♗d7 10.0-0 is a little better for White, because Black's queenside pawns are potential weaknesses.

8.♗h4



8...♗e4 9.f3 ♗g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.g4 ♗e7 12.♗g2 a6 13.♗g3

After a sequence, which is common to the Slav, White should have tried to castle to the queenside. The situation after 13.dxc5 ♗d7 14.0-0 ♗xc5 15.♗c2 e5 16.♗g3 is unclear.

13...b5 14.a3

Here 14.♗f2 looks better. Now Black completely outplays his opponent on both wings.

14...♗a5 15.♗d1 cxd4 16.exd4 ♗c4 17.♗xc4 ♗xc4 18.♗f1 ♗c6 19.♗d3 ♗d6 20.♗f2 ♗e7 21.♗e2 ♗h3 22.♗ag1 ♗ah8 23.♗g2 ♗e8

After some excellent preparation Black refuses to harvest. Simply 23...♗xg3+ 24.♗xg3 ♗xh2+ 25.♗xh2 ♗xh2+ wins a pawn and gives good winning chances.

24.♗e1 ♗c7 25.f4 a5 26.f5

Now White is back in the race.

26...♗xg3+ 27.hxg3 b4 28.axb4 axb4 29.fxg6 f6 30.g5 bxc3 31.gxf6+ gxf6 32.♗c2 ♗3h5 33.♗xc3 ♗xc3 34.bxc3

White is a pawn up, but Black's position is solid enough.

34...♗g5 35.g4 ♗d6 36.♗e3 e5 37.dxe5+

37.♗f3 ♗e8 38.♗f5 e4 39.♗e3 ♗c6 does not bring White more than a draw either.

37...fxe5 38.♗f5 ♗e6 39.♗g3 ♗f4 40.♗h2 ♗xh2 41.♗xh2 ♗xg6 42.♗xg6 ♗xg6 43.♗g3 ♗g8 44.♗h4 ♗h8+ 45.♗g5 e4 46.c4 ♗e5 47.cxd5 ♗g8+ 48.♗h5 ♗f4 49.♗e1 ♗g5+ 50.♗h6 ♗xg4 51.d6 ♗g8 52.♗f1+ ♗e3 53.d7 ♗e2 54.♗f7 e3 55.♗e7 ♗d8 56.♗g6 ♗d2 ½-½

II. Black plays ...c6

This is Black's most solid and popular reply, when the nature of play is largely strategic. The next game is an excellent example of some positional themes.

□ Luc Winants

■ Kivanc Haznedaroglu

Warsaw 2005

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c6 3.e3 ♗b6

Otherwise White can play 4.c4, resulting in a Slav where White's dark-squared bishop is well placed on f4. For example, after 3...♗f5 4.c4 ♗xb1 (the alternative 4...♗f6 5.♗b3 ♗b6 6.c5 ♗xb3 7.axb3 gives White a clear advantage, because he will attack on the queenside with b4 and b5) 5.♗xb1 (in order to meet 5...♗a5+ with 6.b4) 5...e6 6.♗d3 ♗b4+ 7.♗e2 ♗f6 8.c5 ♗bd7 9.a3 ♗a5 10.b4 ♗c7 11.♗xc7 ♗xc7 12.f4 White had a huge

space advantage in the game Sergeev-Belikov, Alushta 2005.

4.b3

4.♖c1 is a good alternative.

4...♙f5 5.♙d3 ♗xd3 6.♖xd3 ♘f6 7.♘f3 e6 8.0-0 ♙e7 9.c4 ♖a6



Pinning the c-pawn. Instead after 9...♗bd7 10.♗c3 0-0 11.c5 ♖d8 12.h3 White is better because he will advance his queenside pawns and Black has no counterplay in the centre.

10.♗bd2 0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♖xe4 ♘d7 14.♖e2

A multi-purpose move defending a2 and introducing a pin along the e-file.

14...♖fe8 15.♖ad1

On a later occasion, Winants put his rook on c1. The position was equal after 15.♖ac1 ♖a5 16.♖fd1 ♖f5 17.♙g3 ♗f6 18.♗e5 ♖e4 19.♖b2 in the game Winants-Lemmers, Enschede 2005.

15...♖ad8 16.h4

White opens a new front as Black is OK in the centre.

16...b5

Black starts a counterattack to gain control over d5.

17.♖c1 ♗b6 18.♙g5 ♙xg5 19.hxg5 bxc4 20.bxc4 c5 21.dxc5 ♘d7 22.♖fd1 ♗xc5 23.♗e5

White is still slightly better with his passed

pawn and active knight on e5 which has the support of pawn g5.

23...♖b7 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.♖d1 ♖f8

This looks odd. When under pressure, swapping pieces usually gives relief. The logical 25...♖xd1+ 26.♖xd1 ♖c7 27.♖f3 h6 28.g6 fxg6 29.♗xg6 ♗h7 seems equal.

26.♖e3 ♖c7 27.g3 f6?! 28.gxf6 ♖xf6 29.♗f3

It seems strange to remove the knight from its ideal square, but White wants it on b3 to chase the Black knight from its ideal square.

29...h6 30.♗d4 ♖d7 31.♖d2 ♖a4?! 32.♗b3 ♗a6?



Black's f6 has put him into trouble, but this is the decisive mistake. Black should swap, although White is better after 32...♗xb3 33.axb3. The game continuation 33.♖d8+ ♗h7 34.♖e4+ ♖g6 35.♖a8 ♖f6 36.♖h8+ ♗g6 37.♖e4+ ♗f7 38.♖b7+ ♗g6 is not decisive here.

33.♖d8+ ♗h7 34.♖e4+ ♖g6 35.♖a8 ♖g5?!

35...♖f6 is more tenacious.

36.♖h8+ ♗g6 37.♖e4+ ♗f7 38.♗d4 ♗c5 39.♖f4+ ♗g6 40.♗f3 ♖d1+ 41.♗g2 ♗d3 42.♖e4+ ♗f6 43.♖f8+ ♗e7 44.♖a8 ♗d6 45.♖d8+

45.♖b8+ mates even quicker.

45...♗e7 46.♖e8+ ♗d6 47.♖d8+ ♗c6 48.♖xe6+ ♗c5 49.♖a5+ 1-0

III. Black plays ...e6

An early ...e6 implies that Black temporarily keeps his bishop inside the pawn chain. It is a little bit passive and may invite White to attack. In the first game Black plays ...♗d6, but swapping the dark square bishops does not solve his problems.

□ Jonathan Rowson
 ■ Stewart Haslinger
 Scarborough ch-GBR 2004

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 e6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
 5.♘d2 ♗d6

If Black wants to play ...♗d6, he should do it on his third move. With his c-pawn already on c5, more dark squares get weak.

6.♗xd6 ♜xd6 7.♞g4!



The delay of ♘f3 enables this strong move.

7...g6 8.♘gf3 ♞e7

8...e5 9.♞g3 is not nice for Black, but now he threatens e5 again.

9.♞f4 cxd4

It is surprising that Black already has problems with his development. For example, 9...♘f6 drops a pawn after 10.dxc5.

10.exd4 ♞f6 11.♞e3

Of course White keeps the queens on the board.

11...h5

11...♗e7 looks more natural, but White has a clear advantage anyway. Black's main problem is that he has a bad bishop and has to wait passively.

12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♞e7 15.♗d3

Now White preserves his excellent bishop.

15...♗h6 16.♘f3 ♜f8

White's preferred plan is to castle in the opposite direction of Black's king and now he can, because Black has finally committed his king. Within a few moves Black will be under attack.

17.h3 ♜g7 18.♞f4 a6 19.g4 ♗b5
 20.♗c2

Still keeping the bishop.

20...d4 21.♘xd4 ♗c6 22.♞g1 hxg4
 23.hxg4 ♗d5 24.0-0-0



A nice moment to castle with pawn a2 hanging. Black cannot take because of 24...♗xa2 25.♞f6+ ♞xf6 26.cxf6+ ♜f8 27.b3.

24...♞h4 25.♗b3

Now it is time to swap bishops because ♗d5 is a good defender.

25...♗xb3 26.axb3 ♘g8 27.♘f3

White directs his whole army to the kingside and leaves Black defenceless.

27...♞e7 28.♘g5 ♜f8 29.♞h1 ♞h6

30.♘e4 ♞d8 31.♞de1 ♞d3 32.♞xh6

♘xh6 33.♞h1 ♘g8 34.♘f6 ♞c5

35.♞h7+ 1-0

If you think that was a crushing victory, you really should take a look at the following 'classical' game. It sees Black developing traditionally and soon White is on the attack.

□ **Dragutin Sahovic**
 ■ **Giancarlo Franzoni**
 Biel 1980

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3

If White had played 2.♗f4 here, then the game would have been perfect, but developing the bishop first is a modern subtlety.

2...e6 3.♗f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗f6 6.♗bd2 ♗e7

With a slightly different move order we have reached a position which will occur often from the London set-up. With his last move Black threatens to remove ♗f4 from play with ♘h5. White prevents this and plays a better move than the standard ♗d3.

7.♗e5 0-0?



It is too early to castle. For the rest of the game White will aim all of his pieces at the poor king on g8. Better is 7...♗xe5 8.♗xe5 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♗b6 10.♗c2 ♗b5 as in the game Suskovic-Dumitrache, Zagreb 1997, and now White's only try for an advantage is 11.c4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4.

8.♗d3 ♗d7

Black could try to get his f-pawn in between, but White has a powerful attack after 8...♗d7 9.♗h5 f5 10.g4.

9.♗f3 ♗c8 10.♗h3 g6 11.♗h6 ♗e8 12.f4 ♗xe5?

Very cooperative. White now gets an half open f-file for free and the black knight is forced to an awkward square.

13.fxg5 ♗h5 14.g4 ♗g7 15.0-0



White often castles on the opposite side in order to launch an attack, but here castling kingside puts the king safe and a rook on the attractive f-file.

15...♗f8 16.♗f3 b5 17.♗f4 h5

White threatened ♗h6, ♗g5, ♗xg5, ♗f6 with a decisive mating attack, but the text move causes similar problems.

18.gxh5 ♗xh5 19.♗h6 ♗g7

19...♗e8 does not save the game after 20.♗g4 followed by ♗xg6.

20.♗h1 b4 21.♗g1 ♗f5 22.♗g5 bxc3 23.♗g7 1-0

A good example of how a quiet set-up can turn into a irresistible attacking position.

Hopefully this chapter has inspired you to play some entertaining games with the Improved London System. And remember: bishop first!

CHAPTER 13

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Najdorf



6. ♕f3: Just another legal move?

One of Black's most successful 'defences' is surely the Najdorf. What is White to do? The former main line 6. ♖g5 has been analysed down to the draw. The most popular choice 6. ♗e3 makes for exciting chess, but also for a lot of theory. Solid but nothing special is 6. ♗c2, nor do 6. ♗c4 or 6. f4 promise much in the way of an opening advantage. Apart from these five most frequently played lines, five other legal moves were also tried in the past (6. a4, 6. g3, 6. h3, 6. ♗d3 and 6. f3). In the 1990s 6. ♗g1 became popular even at the highest level. This move could very well be the subject of an SOS-issue if it were not for the fact that black players are hardly surprised anymore when faced with this rook

move. So what move is it that this SOS has in store for you? Fear not, dear reader, it is not 6. ♗b1(!), but the perhaps slightly less shocking 6. ♗f3.

The point of the early queen move is to prevent some typical Najdorf manoeuvres and to follow a development plan along the lines of ♗e3, 0-0-0, and g4-g5 (sometimes prepared by h3). There is no existing theory: ECO, NCO, and Nunn/Gallagher's *The Complete Najdorf* do not mention 6. ♗f3. So, a lot of points for surprise value! The absence of analytical source material, of course, also means that there is a lot of room for your own analysis and creative ideas. Now what about points for soundness?

While I certainly would not say that 6.♖f3 refutes the Najdorf (but then again what six-move alternative does?), it is only fair to stress that so far White's practical results have been excellent. Admittedly, making large statistical claims on the basis of so few games would be ludicrous, so I am going to avoid that.

The five selected games in this chapter speak in favour of 6.♖f3. They are fun to play through and to analyse. And while you are in the mood, why not try 6.♖f3 in your next Najdorf!

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♟f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♖f3

Now why develop your queen so early? Let us first see what set-ups White is preventing. First of all, there is 6...e5 (the real Najdorf move). After 7.♗f5 White is a little better. Also unsatisfactory is 6...♗c6, as after 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.e5! dxe5 9.♖xc6+ ♗d7 10.♖b7 White is again at least ±. Far worse is 6...b5? 7.e5 dxe5 8.♖xa8 exd4 9.♗xb5!, winning.

What are playable moves for Black? Najdorf players will probably choose from the following three: 6...♗bd7, 6...♖b6, or 6...e6. Another possibility is the Dragon option with 6...g6!?

□ David Tebb

■ Adam Musson

England It 1996/97 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♟f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♖f3 ♖c7?!

Two other tries that will not frighten the 6.♖f3 player are:

- 6...e5?! 7.♗f5 ♗xf5 8.♖xf5 ♗c6 9.♗e3 ♖a5 10.0-0 ♗d8 11.♗c4 ♗e7 12.g4 h6 13.h4 and White was well on his way to win in Karklins-Policarpio, Philadelphia 2001.
- 6...♗c6 7.♗e3 (7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.e5 dxe5

9.♖xc6+ ♗d7 10.♖b7) 7...♗g4 8.♗xc6 bxc6 9.♗c4 ♗e5 10.♖e2 ♗xc4 11.♖xc4 ♗d7 12.0-0 e6 13.♗ad1 d5? 14.exd5 cxd5 15.♗xd5! exd5 16.♗xd5 and White wins back the piece with interest. Abergel-Sutovsky, Internet 2003.

7.♗g5

Worth considering too is 7.♗d5.

7...♗c6 8.0-0



8...e6

White gets decent compensation after 8...♗g4 9.♗d5 ♖c8 10.♖e3, and now:

- 10...♗xd5 11.exd5 ♗xd1 12.dxc6 ♗h5 (12...♗g4 13.h3) 13.g4!? ♗xg4 14.♗g2, with good compensation for the sacrificed material.
- 10...♗xd1 11.♗b6, when the lines fork:
 - 11...♗g4 12.♖d2 ♖d8 13.♗xa8, and White stands better.
 - 11...♖d8 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♗xa8 ♗xc2 (13...♖xa8 14.♗xd1), and now 14.♖a7!, when 14...♗xe4 15.♗c7+ ♗d7 16.♗xa6+ ♗e8 (16...♗e6 17.♖e3+-) 17.f3 ♗f5 18.g4 ♗c8? leads to mate after 19.♗c7+ ♗d7 20.♗e6+! ♗xe6 21.♗c4+ d5 22.♗e1+ ♗d6 23.♗f4+ e5 24.♗xe5+ ♗e6 25.♗d4+ ♗e4 26.♗xe4+ ♗d6 27.♗c5 mate!
 - Best is 11...♖b8 which denies White's queen access to the a7-square as in the previous line.

9.h3 ♗e7 10.g4 h6 11.♗e3 ♗e5

12. ♖g3 ♗d7

The alternative is 12...g5, but 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 looks slightly better for White.

13.f4 ♖c4 14.♗xc4 ♜xc4 15.g5 ♖h5 16.♜f3 hxg5 17.fxg5 f6

Perhaps 17...g6 was a stronger option, but White is better anyway. The remainder of the game is less interesting for our purposes. White can avoid the complications after 6...♜c7 with 7.♗d5.

18.♞d3 fxg5 19.e5 d5 20.♞hd1 ♖f4 21.♗xf4 0-0 22.b3 ♜c5 23.♗ce2 gxf4 24.♜g4 ♞ac8 25.♗xf4 ♞f5 26.h4 g5 27.♗g6 ♗d8 28.♜h5 ♜g7 29.♗xf5+ exf5 30.c4 ♗e6 31.hxg5 ♗g8 32.♜h6+ ♜f7 33.♞xd5 ♜e3+ 34.♜b1 ♜e4+ 35.♜a1 1-0

□ Charles Kennaugh

■ Alan Hanreck

England tt 1996/97 (11)

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♜f3 ♗bd7 7.h3

The good point of 6...♗bd7 is the need for this preparatory move; the bad thing is that the f6-knight cannot retreat to d7 now, after a subsequent g4-g5.

In Kennaugh-Collier, England tt 1998/99. White played 7.♗e3, when Black should have played 7...e6 8.0-0-0 or 8.h3, with similar play as in the main game. Instead the game went: 7...♗c5 8.♗b3! ♗xb3 9.axb3 ♗d7? (another mistake. 9...c6±) 10.♗d5! ♗xd5 11.cxd5 g6 12.♗d4 f6 White had a huge positional advantage and won.

7...e6

The game Fontaine-Gormally, France tt 2002, went 7...g6 8.g4 ♗g7 9.♗e3 ♗e5 10.♜g2 h5. Unfortunately, the players now called it a day by agreeing to an early draw.

8.g4

After 8.♗c3 ♜c7 9.g4 h6 10.0-0-0 b5

11.♗g2 ♗b7 12.a3 ♖c5 13.♜e2 ♗cxe4 Black was clearly better in Tebb-Hanreck, England 1996/97 (2), although he only drew. It is more logical to play g4 as soon as possible, since the threat of g5 is annoying for Black, who needs to think of a square to withdraw his knight to. In the game Black decides to prevent g5 with

8...h6 9.♗g2 ♜b6

A familiar move to force the knight to b3. If 9...♗e7, then 10.♜g3! planning 11.f4 or simply 11.♗e3.

10.♗b3 ♗e5 11.♜e2 g5!?

Black attempts to control the dark squares, a risky strategy as White is able to open files now.

12.f4 gxf4 13.♗xf4 ♗d7 14.♞f1 ♗e7 15.0-0-0



White has a pleasant edge. The h6 pawn is weak and White has play along the f-file. In the game Black decides to alter the course of the game drastically.

15...♗b5? 16.♗xb5 axb5 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♜b1 0-0 19.h4

White's attack plays itself.

19...♗h7 20.♞h1 ♞fd8 21.♞df1 ♞d7 22.g5 ♗f8 23.♜h5 ♞c8 24.♗h3 ♜c6 25.g6! fxg6 26.♜xg6+ ♜h8 27.♜xe6 ♜xc2+ 28.♜a1 ♞cd8 29.♞xf8+! ♞xf8 29...♗xf8 30.♜f6+.

30.♜xd7 1-0

□ Corina Peptan

■ Nana Dzagnidze

Calvia Olympiad 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♙xd4 ♘f6 5.♙c3 a6 6.♗f3 g6

Black opts for the Dragon, asking White to justify his previous move. On the other hand, an early ...a6 is not so useful in the Dragon either.

7.h3

Not a good idea is 7.♗g3 ♘g7 8.♙f5 a creative set-up that Kogan tried in a rapid game. After 8...♙xf5 9.exf5 ♘c6 10.♙c4 ♖c8 11.0-0 ♘d4 12.♙d3 ♗d7 13.fxg6 hxg6 14.♖e1 ♖c5! 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♗e3 ♖e5 17.♗d2 ♙f4 18.♚xe5 ♘xh3+! Black won in Kogan-S.Savchenko, Cannes rapid 2000. Immediate resignation could have been forced with 18...♙f3+!

7...♙g7 8.♙e3



8...0-0

Black does not have to castle immediately. Practice has seen:

– 8...♗c7 9.g4 ♘c6 10.0-0 h6 (the threat was 11.g5 and 12.♘d5 – a distinct disadvantage of Black's 8th move) 11.♙b1 0-0 12.♗e2 (handing Black a tempo to make room for the f-pawn. Note that compared with a normal Dragon ...a6, ...h6 and ...♗c7 are questionable extra moves. Kosteniuk

would be better off without especially these last two moves) 12...♙a5 13.f4 (13.g5! hxg5 14.♙xg5±) 13...b5 14.f5 ♘c4 15.♙c1?! (15.g5) 15...♙e5? (15...♙a3+! 16.♙a1 b4) 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♙b7 18.♙g2 ♗c4 19.♗xc4 ♘xc4 20.♖he1 ♘c5 21.fxg6 fxg6 22.♖e2 ♖f7 23.♙e6 with a big advantage in Peptan-Kosteniuk, Gothenburg 2005.

– 8...♘bd7 9.0-0-0 ♗c7 10.g4 h6 11.♙b1 b5 12.♙g2 ♙b7 13.♗e2 ♖c8 14.f4 ♘b6? 15.c5 dxe5 16.♘dxb5! axb5? (16...♗b8) 17.♗xb5+ ♙fd7?? 18.♙xb6 and White won in a few moves Peptan-Zivkovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2005.

– 8...♘c6 (this is a healthy alternative to 8...0-0) 9.0-0-0 (9.♘xc6?! bxc6 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘d5 cxd5 12.♗xd5 ♙e6 is fine for Black: 13.♗c6+ ♙d7) 9...♙d7 10.♘xc6 (10.g4 ♖c8 11.g5 ♘h5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♙d4 e5 14.♙e3 ♙e6 15.♗e2 ♗c7 and Black had enough for the pawn after 16.♗xa6 0-0 17.♗a7 ♗d8 in Fontaine-Bistric, Kastav 2002) 10...♙xc6 (10...bxc6) 11.♘d5 ♙xd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.♙b1 ♗c7 14.g4 ♖fc8 15.c3 b5 16.h4 ♘d7 17.h5 ♙e5 18.♗c4 ♖ab8 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.♖d4! ♘c4 21.♙xc4 bxc4 22.f4! with the better position in Kogan-Ortega, Lido Estensi 2003.

9.0-0-0 ♙d7 10.g4 ♘c6



11.♙b3

The alternatives are:

– 11. ♖g3 ♟xd4? 12. ♟xd4 ♖a5 13. ♖e3 ♟c6 14. f4 ♟d7 15. ♟xg7 ♜xg7 16. g5 ♖c5 17. ♖d2 b5 18. h4 b4 19. ♟d5 ♟xd5 20. exd5 a5 21. h5 gave White all the chances in Birk-Fröhlich, Germany Bundesliga B 2000/01.

– 11. ♟f5!? ♟e5 12. ♖g3 ♟xf5!? 13. exf5 ♟c8 14. f4 ♟c4 15. ♟xc4 ♟xc4 16. ♖g2? (16. ♟d4 ♟e4 17. ♟xe4 ♟xd4 18. ♟xd4 ♟xd4) 16... ♟xc3 17. bxc3 ♖a5 with more than enough compensation in Holzer-Danner, Vienna 2003.

11...h6

Again, weakening the kingside with this move does not look good.

12. ♖e2 a5 13. a4! ♟b4 14. f3

Rightly opting for solid protection of e4, and trying to make use of her positional plusses (the strong squares d5, b5 and b6 plus the weak black kingside). Black gets excellent counterplay after 14. f4 ♟c8.

14...♟c8

Or 14... ♖e8 15. ♟b5 ♟c8 16. c3 and the direct threats have been averted.

15. ♟d4 ♖e8 16. ♟db5 ♟xb5 17. ♖xb5 ♟d7



It is clear that Black has enough counterplay anyway, play is about equal.

18. ♟d4 ♟e5 19. ♖xe8 ♟fxe8 20. ♟b5 20... ♟e2 ♟ed3+. 20... ♟f8 21. f4 ♟c4? Now White will be better. Correct was 21... ♟cd3+. **22. ♟xg7 ♜xg7 23. ♟d4**

♟e3 24. ♟d2 g5 25. fxf5 hxf5 26. ♟e1 ♟c4 Perhaps 26... ♟exc2!? 27. ♟xc2 ♟xc2 28. ♜xc2 ♟h8 29. ♟e3 ♟h6. **27. ♟xc4 ♟xc4 28. e5** Creating a weakness. **28... ♟h8 29. exd6 exd6 30. ♟e3 ♟h6 31. ♟b5** The ending is very unpleasant for Black. White has only one weak pawn (h3), while Black's position is littered with them. **31... ♟f4 32. b3 d5 33. c3 ♟c6 34. ♟xd5** Peptan is winning easily now. **34... ♟f1+ 35. ♜c2 ♟f2+ 36. ♟d2 ♟hf6 37. ♟xf2 ♟xf2+ 38. ♟d3 f6 39. ♟d6 ♟e5+ 40. ♜e4 b6 41. ♟d5 ♜g6 42. ♟c4 ♟d7 43. ♜c6 ♟c5 44. ♜xb6 ♟xb3 45. ♟xa5 ♟d2 46. ♜b5 f5 47. gxf5+ ♜xf5 48. ♟c6 ♜f4 49. ♟d3 ♟e4 50. a5 ♟b2+ 51. ♟b4 ♜e5 52. a6 ♟d6+ 53. ♟xd6** **1-0**

□ Aleksandar Wohl

■ Neuris Delgado

Bled Olympiad 2002

1. e4 c5 2. ♟f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♟xd4 ♟f6 5. ♟c3 a6 6. ♖f3 e6 7. g4 ♟c6!?

Or 7... ♟e7 8. g5 ♟fd7 9. h4 ♟c6 10. ♟c3 0-0 11. ♖g3 ♟de5 12. f4 ♟xd4 13. ♟xd4 ♟c6 14. ♟e3 b5 15. ♟g2 ♟b7 16. 0-0 and Black came under attack after a quick f4-f5 in the game Budimir-Licina, Bosnjaci 2001. For 7... ♖b6 see the next game Kogan-Jakovljevic.

8. ♟xc6

Not 8. ♟e3? ♟c5.

8...bxc6 9. g5 ♟d7 10. h4 ♟e7 11. b3

With an open b-file the fianchetto is quite sensible. White protects his queenside and hopes to attack along the main diagonal.

11...a5!? 12. ♟b2 0-0 13. 0-0-0

Less logical is 13. a4 e5 14. 0-0-0 ♟c5 15. ♟c4 ♟e6 16. ♟xe6 fxe6 and Black was better in Afek-Shanava, Moscow 2004.

13...♟c5 14. ♟e2 a4 15. b4 ♟d7

16. ♖c3

With the kings on opposite wings, both sides play bluntly for the attack. The position is extremely complicated, and it is easy to go wrong.



16...e5 17.a3

Defending against ...a4-a3 rather than going for 17. ♖xc6 ♖b6 with dangerous compensation.

17...♙a6 18.f4 c5! 19.bxc5 ♖c8 20.fxe5 ♗xc5

Stronger is 20...♗xc5! when White's queen has to leave the diagonal.

21. ♖d4



21...♗xe5

Bad is 21...♗xe5? 22. ♖xc5. Best was 21...♗xe2 22. ♗xe2 (unclear is 22.exd6 ♗xg5+ 23.hxg5 ♖xg5+ 24.♗d2 ♗g4)

22...♖c7! to sacrifice an exchange after 23.cxd6 ♗xc2+ 24.♖b1 ♗xb2+ 25.♖xb2 ♗xd6.

22. ♗f4 ♗xf1 23. ♗hxf1 ♗c5 24. ♗fe1 24. ♗d5! ♗xe4? 25. ♗f5 is nearly winning for White. **24... ♖c8 25. ♖b1 ♖g4?! 26. ♗d5 ♗d8 27. ♗e3! ♖c8 27... ♖xe4? 28. ♖xd6+-, 28. ♗c4 ♗e6 29. ♖d3** White should have gone for the endgame after 29. ♗xd6 ♗xd4 30. ♗xc8 ♗a5 31. ♗f1 ♗xc8 32. ♗xd4. **29... ♗c5 30. ♗xd6 ♖b8 31. ♖a6?! ♗a5! 32. ♗e3 ♗c3 33. ♗xc3 ♗xc3 34. ♗xf7! ♖c8 35. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 36. ♗d6 ♗cd8 37. e5 ♗f4 38. h5 ♗xg5 39. h6 gxf6 40. ♗h1 ♗f7 41. ♗xf7 ♖xf7 42. ♗xh6 ♖g7 43. ♗b6 ♗d1+ 44. ♖a2 ♗e4 45. e6+ ♖g6 46. e7+ ♖f7 47. ♗f6+ ♖xe7? 47... ♗e8!-+. **48. ♗h6 ♗d2 49. ♗xh7+ ♖d6 50. ♗h6+ ♖d5 51. ♗h5+ ♖c4 52. ♗a5** ½-½**

□ Artur Kogan

■ Vlado Jakovljevic

Ljubljana 1999

I've saved a particularly fine game for last. If the previous games did not whet your appetite, don't worry, this one certainly will.

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4.d4 cxd4 5. ♗xd4 a6 6. ♖f3 e6 7.g4

The American Andrew Karklins (who regularly employs 6. ♖f3) has a strong predilection for 7.b3 here. While he defeated a young Peter Svidler with the finchetto I prefer Kogan's set-up.

7... ♖b6 8. ♗b3 ♖c7

Velcheva-S.Vajda, Batumi Ech-tt 1999, went: 8... ♗c6 9.g5 ♗d7 10. ♗e3 ♖c7 11. ♖h3 ♗c5!? 12. ♗xc5 dxc5 13.f4 ♗d7 14. ♗g2 0-0-0 15.0-0-0.

9.g5 ♗fd7 10. ♖h3! g6

The previous ten moves should be familiar by now. White has started his blitzkrieg on

the kingside. Black has forced the d4-knight back and is trying to develop his pieces in typical Sicilian fashion.

If 10...♘c6, then 11.g6 ♘f6 12.gxf7+, or simply 11.♙e3.

11.♙e3 ♘c6 12.0-0



12...♙g7

In the game Kogan-Yudasin, Jerusalem ch-ISR 1996, Black preferred 12...b5 13.f4 ♘c5 (13...♙b7 14.f5! is too good for White: 14...gxf5 15.exf5 ♘e7 16.fxe6 fxe6, and certainly not 16...♙xh1? 17.exd7+ ♖xd7? 18.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 19.♙h3+) 14.♘c5 dxc5 15.e5! ♙b7 16.♘e4 ♙e7 (16...♘xe5? 17.♘f6+ ♗e7 18.fxe5 ♙xh1? 19.♙xc5+ mates) 17.♙g2 ♘d4 18.♙xd4 cxd4 19.♘d6+! (stronger than 19.♙xd4 ♙c8 20.♙d2 ♙xe4 21.♙xe4 0-0) 19...♙xd6 20.exd6 ♖b6 21.♙xb7 ♖xb7 22.♖d3 ♖d5 23.♖xd4 ♖xd4 24.♙xd4 and White was a healthy pawn up in the double rook ending, an advantage he was unable to convert, however (draw after 65 moves).

Note that the actual move order in Kogan-Yudasin was 6...♖b6 7.♘b3 e6 8.g4 ♘c6 9.g5 ♘d7 10.♙e3 ♖c7 11.♖h3 g6 12.0-0.

13.♘d4 0-0 14.♖g3

Freeing the way for the battering ram h2-h4-h5.

14...♘a5 15.h4 b5 16.h5 b4 17.hxg6 hxg6

Taking the piece is forbidden: 17...bxc3? 18.♖h3 ♙e8 (18...fxg6? 19.♖xh7+ or 19.♘xe6) 19.♖xh7+ ♗f8 20.gxf7 ♗xf7, and now White wins after both 21.g6+ ♗f8 22.♙h6 and 21.♙h4.

18.♖h4 ♙e8



19.♘f5!

A typical knight sacrifice, especially familiar from the Velimirovic Attack. White obtains the d5 square for his other knight.

19...gxf5 20.exf5 exf5

Just bad is 20...bxc3 21.f6. The alternative 20...♙b7 is refuted by 21.f6 ♙xh1 22.fxg7 ♗xg7 23.♖h6+ ♗g8 24.♙d3.

21.♘d5 ♖d8

White also wins after 21...♖b7 22.♙d4 ♘e5 (22...♖xd5? 23.♖h8+ mates) 23.♘f6+ ♗f8 24.♙xe5! dxe5 25.♙g2! e4 26.♖h7 ♙e6 27.♖g8+ ♗e7 28.♖xg7 ♙ed8 29.♘d7!.

22.♙d4 ♙e5

Not too difficult is 22...♘e5 23.♙b6 ♖d7 24.♘f6+.

23.♙xe5 dxe5 24.♘f6+

24.♖h7+ ♗f8 25.♖h8+ would also have been sufficient.

24...♗f8

24...♙xf6 25.gxf6 ♖xf6 26.♙g1+ ♗f8 drops the queen after 27.♖xb4+ ♖e7 28.♙g8+.

25.♖h8+ ♙xh8 26.♙xh8+ ♗g7 27.♙xd8 ♘xf6 28.gxf6+ ♗xf6 29.♙e8

1-0

CHAPTER 14

Ian Rogers

Thinking Sideways: 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5



The Malinoise Defence

Very few players even know of the existence of the Malinoise Defence – 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5!? – and the line therefore usually comes as more of a shock than a mere surprise!

The opening was invented by the Belgian IM Michel Jadoul and although many of Jadoul's games with the line have been lost, his original analyses were made available to this author and form the backbone of this article.

Jadoul, who undoubtedly deserves naming rights to the line, has chosen to call the opening after the Belgian town of Malines where he first played 2...b5!?

ECO devotes a single line to 2...b5, ending with '±' based on an old Van der Sterren-

Rogers game played weakly by Black.

However matters are not so simple for White and a clear path to advantage for White against best play by Black has yet to be established.

Once you become known as a Malinoise player, some pleasant surprise may await. For example, at a 1991 tournament I played 1...c6 against Rustem Dautov, who then invested five minutes deciding that it would be too risky to allow 2.c4 b5 and played 2...f3. I replied 2...f6 after which Dautov again fell into thought, aware that on 3.c4, b5 was again playable. Finally Dautov decided upon 3...f4 and Black equalised easily after 3...d5 4.e3 g4.

Transpositions

As indicated from the previous paragraph, the Malinoise can be played with or without the insertion of Qf3 and $\dots\text{Qf6}$. For the purposes of this article I will deal with only the 'pure' 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5 move order. As will be seen, the inclusion of Qf3 and $\dots\text{Qf6}$ will usually favour Black, avoiding White's sharpest lines which generally involve a quick e4 advance.

Themes

The Malinoise is most effective when Black is allowed to exchange his b pawn for the White c pawn. After playing $\dots\text{bxc4}$ Black most often follows with $\dots\text{d5}$ and achieves easy equality. Black can also try to exchange light-squared bishops with $\dots\text{Ba6}$, positionally advisable even though a recapture on a6 with a knight can leave the knight badly placed.

White's two critical options involve avoiding the exchange on c4, either by playing 3.e5 or 3.cxb5.

After 3.e5 Black must break up the queenside bind with a timely $\dots\text{d6}$ ($\dots\text{e5}$ gambits seem to lead nowhere) after which the b5 pawn looks strange but is difficult to exploit.

3.cxb5 is the most popular choice, leading to a St George (1...a6 and 2...b5) type of position where Black has not wasted a move with ...a6.

This 'advantage' of the Malinoise over the St George can be misleading – very often Black tries to protect the b pawn with $\dots\text{Wb6}$ rather than ...a6 only to find that the queen is subject to attack by the White minor pieces (Qe3 or Qbd2-c4 after a4).

White's d4 and e4 pawn centre is not scary by itself but Black must react accurately when White tries to undermine the b5 pawn with a4. Circumstances alter cases but most often Black should choose to play $\dots\text{bxa4}$

(rather than ...b4), following with ...a5 if necessary, to keep square b4 for his pieces.

1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5 3.cxb5

White's most common choice but there are plenty of alternatives:

● **3.b3** Qf6 (3...d5! has been played a few times, leading to a strange type of Slav Defence)

– On 4.e3 Black should just return to the main line with 4...g6 since 4...e6?! 5... Qf3 leaves Black struggling for a good move: 5... bxc4 (5...a6 6... Qd3 d5 7.0-0 is just a bad version of the 4...a6 Slav for Black, while; 5... Qa6 6.c5± was even worse in Anelli-Bulcourn, Buenos Aires 1993) 6... bxc4 and White has at least a slight edge.

– 4... Qf3 g6! (4... bxc4 5... bxc4 d5 6.e3 Qf5 7... Qd3 Qxd3 8... Wxd3 Wa5+?! 9... Qbd2 e6 10.0-0 Qbd7 11.e4 dx e4 12... Qxe4 Qxe4 13... Wxe4 is the sort of position Black should avoid – White won quickly in Mohandesi-Vandevort, Clichy 1993) 5.e3 Qg7 6... Qd3 0-0 7.0-0 bxc4 8... bxc4 c5! 9... Qbd2 (9... Qc3) 9... Qc6 10... Nb1 cxd4 11.exd4 d5 and Black already has an excellent game. In Clausen-Jadoul, Copenhagen 1988, Black went on to win a thematic game (which deserves to be mentioned in full) by pressuring the d pawn as follows: 12.c5 Wc7 13... Ne1 Nd8 14.h3



14... Qh5! 15... Qb3 Nb8 16... Qf1 Qf5 17... Nb2 Qf4 18.g3 Qe6 19... Nd2 a5 20.a4 Nb4

(20...♗e4! 21.♞xe4 dxe4 22.d5 ♞xb3 23.♞xb3 ♖xc5--+) 21...♗b5 ♗e4! 22.♗xc6 ♞xc6 23.♞xe4 dxe4 24.d5 ♞xd5 25.♞xd5 exf3 26.♞d8+ ♖f8 27.♗d2 ♞xa4 28.♖xa5 ♞b5 29.c6 ♞a1 30.♞xa1 ♗xa1 31.c7 ♞b1+ 32.♖h2 ♞f1 33.♞xf8+ 0-1.

● 3.e3 looks and is innocuous 3...bxc4 4.♗xc4



- 4...♖f6 5.♖f3

Jadoul analysed 5...e6 6.0-0 (6.♖c3 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞e2 d5 9.♗d3 c5 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.e4 dxe4 12.♖xe4 ♖bd7 13.♗g5 worked out well for White in Lacrosse-J.Claesen, Ghent 1989) 6...d5 (Jadoul dismissed 6...♗a6?! in view of 7.♗xa6 ♖xa6 8.e4±) 7.♗d3 c5 8.♖bd2 and now Black should exchange on d4 since 8...♗d6 9.e4 is somewhat better for White.

5...d5 is obvious and healthy: 6.♗e2 e6 (6...♗a6!?) 7.0-0 ♗d6 8.♖c3 ♖bd7 and Black, who has the option of both ...c5 and ...e5, should have nothing to worry about. Ohlzon-J.Claesen, Hallsberg 1991 continued 9.♗d2 e5!?! (9...0-0) 10.dxe5 ♖xe5 11.♖xe5 ♗xe5 12.♞c1 0-0 13.♖a4 ♖e4 when Black was already better and went on to win in 27 moves.

5...♗a6 is not as easy for Black as it looks after 6.♖bd2 d5 (6...♗xc4 7.♖xc4 is similar to positions analysed earlier) 7.♗xa6 ♖xa6 8.♖e5 (8.♞a4?! ♞b6 9.a3 e6

10.♖e5 ♞c8 11.0-0 ♞b5! when Black is already equal and went on to win in Krasevec-Chernikov, Lignano Sabbiadoro World Seniors Championship 2005) 8...♞b6 9.a3 e6 10.b4 ♗d6 11.♖d3 and White had a small but enduring edge in Zarubin-Sobolev, Cherepovets 1993.

5...g6 Jadoul favoured the fianchetto as a method of keeping complications, although there are other good alternatives: 6.0-0 ♗g7 7.♖c3 0-0 8.♞e2 (an attempt to delay ...♗a6 which was condemned by Jadoul. However 8.d5 cxd5 9.♖xd5 ♖c6 offers no worries at all for Black, e.g. 10.♞b1 d6 11.b4 ♗f5 12.♞b3 ♖d7 13.♗b2 ♖ce5 14.♖xe5 ♖xc5 15.♗e2 ♞c8 when Black was already better in De Coninck-Claesen, Huy 1991) 8...d5 9.♗d3 ♗g4 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♞xf3 ♖bd7



and White cannot reasonably prevent 12...e5 when Black is at least equal.

- There is nothing wrong with 4...d5 5.♗d3 ♗a6 6.♖f3 ♖d7 7.♗xa6 ♞a5+ 8.♖c3 ♞xa6 9.♞e2 ♞xe2+ 10.♖xe2 e6 11.♗d2 ♗d6 12.♞hc1 ♖e7 and the endgame is equal, although not boring. Harasta-Jadoul, Cappelle la Grande 1989, was drawn 11 moves later.

- 4...♗a6!? 5.♖d2 ♗xc4 6.♖xc4 should be slightly better for White since ...d5 will always be answered by ♖e5. Kantsler-

Kudischewitsch, Ramat Aviv 2000, continued 6... $\text{d}f6$ 7. $\text{d}f3$ e6 (7...g6 8. $\text{W}b3$ d5 9. $\text{d}ce5$ $\text{W}b6$ was I.Porat-Knol, Hoogeveen Open 2004, and now 10. $\text{W}c2$ instead of 10. $\text{W}xb6$?! would have kept a slight edge) 8.0-0 $\text{e}7$ 9. $\text{e}d2$ 0-0 10. $\text{e}a5$ $\text{W}c8$ 11.b4!? $\text{W}a6$ 12. $\text{W}c2$ and White's bind is hard to shake.

● 3.c5



One of White's most successful weapons against the Malinoise but with accurate play Black should be able to equalise.

– 3... $\text{d}f6$! 4.g3 d6 (despite the imminent long diagonal pressure, Black must undermine the c5 pawn since the more violent 4...e5?! 5.dxe5 $\text{d}e4$ 6. $\text{e}g2$ $\text{d}xc5$ 7. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{d}ba6$ 8. $\text{d}d4$ $\text{W}b6$ 9. $\text{e}e3$ $\text{W}b8$ 10. $\text{d}d2$ looks and was extremely ugly for Black in Bogdanovski-Jacimovic, Star Dojran 1996) 5.cxd6 exd6 6. $\text{e}g2$ $\text{e}e7$ 7.e4 0-0 8. $\text{d}e2$ $\text{e}b7$ 9.0-0 $\text{d}bd7$. Here Jadoul judges the position as unclear, an assessment which seems to be justified since the aggressive 10.f4 can be well met by 10... $\text{W}b6$! with the idea 11. $\text{d}bc3$ (11. $\text{d}d2$?! c5! works out well for Black, e.g. 12.d5?! c4+ 13. $\text{e}h1$ $\text{d}g4$) 11...b4 12. $\text{d}a4$ $\text{W}b5$ when Black's activity more than counterbalances White's pawn centre.

– 3...d6 4.cxd6 exd6 5.e4 leaves White with a clear advantage – the b5 pawn looks pecu-

liarily misplaced. After 5... $\text{d}f6$ 6. $\text{e}d3$ $\text{W}b6$ 7. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{e}g4$ 8. $\text{e}e3$ d5 9.exd5 $\text{d}xd5$ 10.0-0 $\text{e}e7$ 11. $\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}xe3$ 12.fxe3 Black's bishop pair could not compensate for his disjointed queenside and White won in Moskalenko-Laketic, Belgorod 1990.

– 3...e5!? looks exciting but after 4.dxe5! $\text{e}xc5$ 5. $\text{d}c3$ d5 6.exd6 $\text{W}xd6$ 7. $\text{W}xd6$ $\text{e}xd6$ Black's disjointed queenside gives White all the chances in this endgame.

Another Jadoul idea is 4...f6!? – a creative way of trying to make this line playable – but although 5. $\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}a6$ (5...fxe5? 6. $\text{d}e4$ $\text{d}f6$ 7. $\text{d}d6+$ $\text{e}xd6$ 8. $\text{W}xd6$ $\text{W}e7$ 9. $\text{W}xe7+$ $\text{e}xe7$ 10. $\text{d}f3$ ± Jadoul) 6. $\text{d}e4$ $\text{d}xc5$ 7. $\text{d}d6+$ $\text{e}xd6$ 8. $\text{W}xd6$ $\text{W}e7$ 9. $\text{e}e3$ $\text{W}xd6$ 10.exd6 $\text{d}e6$ is unclear according to Jadoul, White should prefer 8.exd6! with serious pressure.

● 3.e4 allows one of the main points behind Black's opening – an exchange on c4 followed by d5. 3...bxc4:

– 4. $\text{W}a4$!? was Jadoul's creative method of trying to revive 3.e4 but after 4... $\text{d}f6$ 5. $\text{d}c3$ d5 (Jadoul claims a refutation of 5...e5!? with 6.dxe5 $\text{d}g4$ 7. $\text{e}xc4$ $\text{W}b6$ 8. $\text{d}h3$ but after 8... $\text{d}xe5$ 9. $\text{e}e2$ $\text{e}e7$ 10.0-0-0 White's advantage may not be too serious) 6.exd5 $\text{d}xd5$ 7. $\text{d}xd5$ $\text{W}xd5$ 8. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{e}a6$ 9. $\text{e}e3$ $\text{e}b5$ 10. $\text{W}c2$ $\text{d}d7$ 11. $\text{e}c1$ $\text{d}b6$, Black has hung onto the pawn and is ready to begin developing his kingside.

– 4. $\text{e}xc4$ d5



5.exd5 cxd5 is fine for Black, whose slightly superior pawn structure is a long term asset. 6.♗b5+ (6.♗d3 ♖f6 7.♗f3 e6 8.0-0 ♗d6 is probably only equal but led to a quick victory for Black in Maggiolo-Bulcourf, Brasil 1997, while 6.♗f3 ♖f6 7.♖c3 e6 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♖c6 10.♗ge2 ♗e7 is another equal position which turned in Black's favour in Burnier-A.Frank, Geneva 1997) 6...♗d7 7.♗a4 e6 8.♗f3 ♗d6 and the position is only equal although this time White eventually prevailed in Martin y Herrera-Bulcourf, San Isidoro 1993. Again it should be noted that if the position stabilises, Black's pawn structure is an asset. It is worth comparing with a standard Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation minority attack position such as the following: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e3 c6 7.♗d3 ♖bd7 8.♗f3 0-0 9.♗c2 ♗e8 10.0-0 ♗f8 11.♞ab1 ♗c6 12.b4 ♖d7 13.♗xc7 ♗xc7 14.b5



In similar positions, Black will try ...c5 or allow the exchange on c6 but only very rarely capture on b5 because the resulting pawn structure – with isolated d5 pawn and second potential weakness along the b file – is considered too unpleasant for Black. In the position after 5.exd5 cxd5, Black has already created the pawn struc-

ture for which White works so hard in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation so if Black can neutralise White's temporary development advantage, the long term chances should be all his.

5.♗b3 e6 6.♖c3 ♖f6 7.♗ge2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g3 dxe4 10.♖cxe4 ♖bd7 11.♗c2 would have been nothing for White until Black became panicky and played 11...g6?! 12.♗h6 ♗e8 13.♗a4 ♗a6 14.♗e1 ♗c4? 15.♗xc6 ♖xe4 16.♖xe4 ♗c8 17.d5! exd5 18.♗d4 with a decisive edge for White in Paglilla-Bulcourf, Florida Valle 1993.

5.♗d3

Now I rather like Jadoul's simple solution of 5...dxe4!, the point of which is seen on move seven. After 6.♗xe4 ♖f6 7.♗f3



7...♗e6! 8.♖c3 ♗d5 with the follow-up ...e6 after which Black has nothing to fear. However Black has also suffered no problems after 5...e6 6.♗f3 (6.♖c3 ♖f6 7.♗ge2 ♗e7 8.♗c2 ♗a6 9.0-0 0-0 was equal in Julia-Bulcourf, Villa Martelli 2004) 6...dxe4 7.♗xe4 ♖f6 8.♗d3 ♗a6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♗g5 ♗b6 11.♗xa6 ♗xa6 12.♖c3 ♖bd7 Recoulat-Bulcourf, Aca-susso 1994.

White's remaining third move options are less testing for Black but are included for

completeness and also to demonstrate other themes which Jadoul introduced.

● **3.♟f3** bxc4 4.d5 ♟f6 5.e4 proved to be a far too overambitious gambit in view of 5...♟xe4 6.♟xc4 ♖a5+ 7.♟e2?! ♟a6 8.♟xa6 ♗xa6+ 9.♟e3 ♟f6 and White's well developed king was soon hunted down in Pechisker-Welling, Richmond Western Canadian Open 2004.

● **3.d5** bxc4 4.e4 cxd5 5.exd5 (5.♗xd5 ♟c6=) 5...♗c7!? (Jadoul's original plan but there is nothing wrong with simple development for Black either) 6.♗d4 (Jadoul dismissed 6.d6!? because of 6...♗a5+ 7.♟c3 ♗e5+ 8.♟e2 e6 'with advantage to Black' but after 9.♟f3! ♗xd6 10.♗xd6 ♟xd6 11.♟b5 ♟b4+ 12.♟d2 ♟xd2+ 13.♟xd2 it may be White who holds the edge. Therefore Black should prefer 8...♟b7 with chances for both sides)

– 6...♟f6 7.♟xc4 (7.♟f4 ♗b6!) 7...♟a6 8.♟d2 e6 is also good for Black.

– 6...e6 7.♟f4 ♟c5 8.♗xc4 ♗b6 9.♟c3 d6 10.♟xc5 dxc5 and Black is fine.

● After 3.♗c2 bxc4 4.♗xc4 e6 5.♟c3 ♟f6 6.♟g5 d5 7.♗b3 c5 is Jadoul's simple equalising line.

● **3.♟d2** ♟f6 4.e4 (4.♟gf3 bxc4 5.♟xc4 g6 6.g3 ♟g7 7.♟g2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 is a perfectly healthy King's Indian position for Black, e.g. 9.♟d2 ♟e6 10.♗c2 ♟d5 11.♟fe1 ♟bd7 12.♟a5 ♗c8 13.♟cd2 ♗a6 14.♟c3 c5 15.e4 cxd4 16.♟xd4 ♟b7 when Black had equalised in Lerner-Kudischewitsch, Tel Aviv 2001) 4...bxc4 5.♟xc4 d5 6.♟d3 and now, instead of Jadoul's 6...♗b6 7.♟e2 ♟a6, which gives White a nasty initiative after 8.♟xa6 ♗xa6 9.e5 ♟fd7 10.e6! fxe6 11.0-0, Black should be content with another of Jadoul's old themes – 6...dxe4 7.♟xe4 ♟xe4 8.♟xe4 ♟e6! followed by 9...♟d5.

● **3.♟a3** is perhaps the best of White's irregular replies to the Malinoise. After

3...bxc4 4.♟xc4 e6 5.♟f3 ♟f6

– 6.g3 is a little too slow in view of 6...♟a6 (as Jadoul pointed out, 6...d5 7.♟ce5 c5?? walks into 8.♟g5+–) 7.♗a4 ♟xc4 8.♗xc4 ♗b6 9.a3 d5 10.♗a4 ♟bd7 11.♟g2 ♟d6 and Black has nothing to fear.

– 6.♟f4 d5 7.♟ce5 ♟e4 (!, according to Jadoul) 8.a3 f6 9.♟d3 ♟d7 when Jadoul's idea was ...c5, ...♗b6, followed by ...♟a6-c4-b3 – ambitious but possibly achievable. In any case Black has active play while White's plan is harder to establish.

3...cxb5 4.e4

● **4.e3** should not be a problem for Black after 4...a6 5.a4 bxa4 6.♗xa4 ♟f6 7.♟d2 ♟b7 8.♟a5 ♗c8 9.♟d2 ♟c6 10.♗c2 g6 11.♟gf3 d6 12.♟c1 ♗b7 13.♟c4 ♟g7 and Black was OK in Andrews-Lehotzky, Lansing 1989.

Less good is 4...♟b7?!, which walks into 5.♗b3 when Black must sacrifice a pawn for nebulous compensation, e.g. 5...e6 (5...a6 6.a4) 6.♗xb5 ♟a6 7.♗a4 ♟xf1 8.♟xf1 ♟f6 9.f3 ♟e7 10.♟c3 0-0 11.♟ge2 ♟c6 when a draw was agreed due to mutual fear (more justified on Black's behalf) in Lapcevic-D.Maric, Belgrade 2003.

● **4.♟f3 ♟f6**



This is an important position since it arises frequently from a move order such as 1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 c6 3.d4 b5 4.cxb5 cxb5. In theory

Black should have fewer problems than in the main line but in practice White has scored well. Samples of practical play:

– 5.♖b3 a6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♗g5 ♘b7 8.e4!? h6 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.d5 exd5 11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♗c5 13.♗d3 ♗e7+ 14.♔f1 0-0 15.g3 d6 was dead equal in Adler-P.Claesen, Odessa 1990 (although White won a tough fight).

– 5.♗g5!? ♗b6 6.e3 ♘e4 7.♗f4 ♘b7 8.♗d3 e6 9.0-0 f5 10.♘e5 ♘f6 11.♗e2 a6 12.♘d2 d6 13.♘ef3 ♘c6 14.a4 worked out well for White in Aasma-Bossuyt, Huy 1991, so Black should investigate 5...♘b7, 5...e6 or perhaps even 5...♘e4.

– 5.♗f4 e6 6.e3 a6 7.♗d3 ♘b7 8.♘bd2 (8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♘bd2 ♘h5!? 10.♗g3 d6 11.a4 b4 12.a5 is not at all clear, Bali-Biro, Eger 1996) 8...♘c6 9.h3 ♗e7 10.♗c1 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.e4 e5! 13.♗e3 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♗e5 15.♗b1 d5



with a striking resemblance to a Spanish Opening gone right for Black, who won in the game Kreizberg-Kudischewitsch, Tel Aviv 2002.

Instead of 5...e6, 5...♘b7 will probably lead to the same positions, although Black should avoid 6.e3 ♗a5+?!. As usual, trying to save time by omitting 6...a6 turns out to be an error: 7.♘bd2 e6 8.♗d3 ♗e4 9.♗xe4 ♘xe4 10.0-0 ♘f6 11.e4 ♗e7 12.d5! with a very

strong position for White in Mikhalchishin-Tonoli, Sas van Gent 1990.

– 5.g3 takes the pressure off b5 and leads to the type of position most often arising from 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 b5. 5...♘b7 6.♗g2 g6 (if Black wishes to avoid standard positions with 6...e6(!) then this is slightly more accurate than 6...d6 7.♖b3 ♗b6 8.♘c3 b4 9.♘a4 ♗b5 10.a3 a5 11.axb4 axb4 12.♘c3 ♗b6 13.♗xa8 ♗xa8 Kulcsar-Lobermayer, Hungary 1995, when 14.0-0 should be slightly better for White) 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♗b3 ♗b6 9.♘e5?! 0-0 10.♗xb7 ♗xb7 11.♘c3 d6 12.♘f3 a6 13.a4?! b4 14.a5 ♗a7 15.♘d1 ♗b5 16.♗d2 ♘c6 and Black was already well on top in Wismeijer-Bettman, Haarlem 2000.

– 5.e3 Alternatives are plentiful, usually involving preceding e3 by moving White's dark-squared bishop outside the pawn chain. 5...a6 6.♗d3 ♘b7 7.0-0 e6 8.a4 b4 (not bad here but as usual 8...bxa4 would have been safer) 9.♘bd2 ♗e7 10.e4 a5 11.♗e1 d6 12.♘b3 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘bd7 14.♗e2 h6 15.♗d2 ♘b6 16.e5 ♘fd7! 17.♗b1 ♗e8 18.♗d3 ♘f8 when Black's king was safe and Black soon took over the initiative in Byway-Rogers, London Lloyds Bank 1992.

● 4.♗b3



is a typical attempt to resolve the queenside issues quickly but after 4...a6 5.a4 (5.e4 e6 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♘b7 8.♘c3 b4 9.e5 ♗xf3

10.exf6 bxc3 11.gxf3 Glavina Rossi-Rivas Pastor, Ceuta 1994, was exciting, but Black should have been fine after 11...cxb2 12.♙xb2 ♖c6) 5...bxa4 6.♜xa4 e6 7.e4 a5! (although Black has made six moves with his queenside pawns in his first seven, with the b4 square secure and White's queen and rook in need of repositioning later, Black is already close to equality) 8.♗c3 ♗c6 9.♗f3 ♜b8 10.♞d1 ♗f6 11.e5 (11.d5 ♗b4 12.d6 ♙b7 13.e5 ♗g4 14.♙f4 ♞b6 15.♞d2 f6 is also very messy) 11...♗d5 12.♗xd5 exd5 13.♗d3 ♗b4 14.0-0 ♗xd3 15.♞xd3 ♞b6 16.♞e1 ♙b4 17.♗d2 ♙a6 18.♞e3 0-0 19.♙xb4 axb4 20.♞eal ♙b7 21.♞b3 ♙c6 22.♞a6 ♞b5 23.h3 ♞c4



and Black was fine in Kakageldiev-Rogers, Manila Olympiad 1992.

● 4.♙g5 has been tried by some strong players but 4...h6 5.♙h4 ♙b7 6.♗f3 ♗f6 should not be a problem for Black.

● 4.a4 bxa4 5.♗c3 is another try at resolving the queenside. After 5...e6 6.e4 ♙b4 7.♗d3 (7.♞xa4 a5 8.♗f3 ♗e7 9.♗d3 ♙a6 is fine for Black according to Jadoul) 7...♗e7 8.♗f3 a3! 9.0-0 axb2 10.♙xb2 ♗g6 11.♗b5 Black should have hung on to his extra pawn with 11...a5 instead of playing 11...0-0?! 12.♗xa7 ♙a6 13.♙xa6 ♞xa7 14.d5! ♞xa6 15.♞d4 e5 16.♞xb4 when White had strong pressure on the queenside, Babula-Drazic, Saint Vincent Open 2002.

● Trying to play a London set-up with 4.♙f4 ♙b7 5.♗d2 e6 6.e3 ♗f6 7.♗gf3 should not be threatening for Black, e.g. 7...a6 (7...♞b6?! again works out badly after 8.a4 bxa4 9.♙e2 ♙b4 10.0-0 ♗d5 11.♗c4 ♞b7 12.♗d6+ ♙xd6 13.♙xd6 ♗e4 14.♙a3 ♙b3 15.♞d3 f6 16.♗d2 ♗xd2 17.♞xd2 ♗f7 18.♞ac1 ♗c6 19.e4 and White had tremendous compensation for the pawn in Allacher-Schwab, Austrian Team Championship 2002/03) 8.♙e2 ♙e7 9.h3 0-0 10.0-0 d6 11.a4 bxa4 12.♞xa4 ♗bd7 13.♞fc1 ♗b6 14.♞a5 ♗bd5 15.♙g5 h6 16.♙h4 and now instead of 16...♞c8 17.♗c4 ♞xa5 18.♗xa5 ♞xc1+ 19.♞xc1 which gave White an edge in Van Herck-Claesen, Ghent 1989, Black could have equalised with 16...♞xa5 17.♞xa5 ♞fc8. 4...♙b7



4...♗f6 will almost invariably transpose to the main lines, but the careless 4...e6?! allows 5.♙xb5! ♞a5+ 6.♗c3 ♙b4 7.♞d3 when Black did not have enough for the pawn in Sorokin-Bulcourf, Villa Ballester 1996.

5.♙d3

● If White wishes to play a set-up with 5.f3 then this is the moment to do so. After 5...a6 (5...b4, as usual, weakens the c4 square too much. After 6.♙e3 e6 7.♗d2 ♗f6 8.♙d3 ♙e7 9.♗h3 a5 10.0-0 ♙a6 11.♙xa6 ♞xa6 12.d5 0-0 13.♗c4 exd5 14.exd5 d6 15.♞d2 ♗bd7 16.♞ac1 Black was without an active plan in Bernal Moro-Rivas Pastor,

Spain 1993) **6.♗e3 e6** (6...g6 7.♘d2 ♗h6 looks a little too original – after 8.♖b3 ♗xe3 9.♖xe3 ♖b6 10.♗d3 ♘c6 11.♗e2 e5 12.0-0 ♗ge7 13.♗b3 ♚c8 14.♚ac1 0-0 15.♖f2 d6 16.d5 ♖xf2+ 17.♗xf2 ♗a7 18.♗a5 Black had to defend a very ugly ending in Remlinger-J.Frank, St Martin 1991)



White has a choice of three healthy moves:
 – **7.♗d2 ♗h6!?**. Another tricky Jadoul idea. After 8.♗d3 f5 9.♗e2? (9.♗h3!) 9...fxc4 10.♗xe4 (on 10.fxe4 ♗g4 is awkward) 10...♗f5 Black was already fine in Santa Torres-Jadoul, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, and Black went on to win a fine game after 11.♗f2 ♗b4+ 12.♗c3 0-0 13.0-0 ♗c6 14.a3 ♗e7 15.♗c2 ♗h4 16.♗g3 ♗ce7 17.♖d3 ♗g6 18.♗ce4 ♗f4 19.♖d2 ♗g5 20.♗h1 ♗h4 21.♗xg5 ♖xg5 22.♗e3 ♚f7 23.♗xf4 ♚xf4 24.♗e4 d5 25.♗c2 ♚af8 26.♚ad1 ♚8f6 27.♚de1 ♚h6 28.♚e5 ♖xg3! 0-1.
 – **7.♗h3 ♗f6 8.♗c2 ♗e7 9.0-0 d5 10.e5 ♗fd7 11.f4 g6 12.♗d2 h5 13.♗f3 ♗c6 14.♗fg5 ♗f8 15.♗h1 ♖b6 16.♚c1 ♗a5 17.b3** was a little better for White in B.Jones-Rogers, Sydney Interclub 1996.
 – **7.♗d3 ♗f6 8.♗e2 ♗c6 9.♗bc3 d5 10.e5 ♗d7 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.f4 g6** should also have been a little better for White until he mistimed his kingside pawn advance and played 13.g4?! ♖b6! 14.♖d2 h5 and now White

was forced to block the kingside and concede equality with 15.g5 in Boichev-Badev, Velingrad 2004, since the logical break 15.f5 fails to 15...gxf5 16.gxf5 ♚g8+ 17.♗h1 ♗cxe5!.

● **5.d5 ♗f6 6.♗d2** looks very odd, yet 6...a6 7.a4 b4? 8.♗gf3 e6 9.♗c4 exd5 10.exd5 ♖e7+ 11.♗f1 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.♗c4 ♖e4 14.♖b3 ♗e7 15.♗g5 worked out well for White in Panczyk-Wielecki, Bielsko Biala 1990. However instead of 7...b4?, 7...e6!? 8.axb5 ♗b4 looks to be a very promising gambit.

● **5.♗xb5?!** sets up White for one of the biggest traps in this opening – 5...♗xe4



6.♗f3?? (6.♗f1) 6...♗xb1 7.0-0 (7.♚xb1 ♖a5+) 7...♗g6 and Black was a piece up for nothing in Liardet-Frank, Geneva 1995.

5...♗f6 6.♗d2

● **6.♖e2** is well met by 6...♗c6! 7.♗f3 ♗b4 8.e5 ♗xd3+ 9.♖xd3 ♗d5 when taking the pawn is risky after 10...♖c8. The game Teo-Jadoul, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988 was a model game for Black and continued 10.0-0 ♖b6 11.♗c3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♖g6! 13.♖xg6 hxg6 14.♗a3 ♚c8 15.♚ac1 ♚c4 16.♗b4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 e6 18.♚b1 ♗xb4 19.♚xb4 ♚xb4 20.cxb4 ♚h4 21.♚d1 ♗e7 22.a3 d6 23.♗g2 and now, instead of 23...a6! with a huge advantage for Black in the endgame, Black carelessly played 23...g5 and

allowed White to break free with 24.♖c1! ♖xd4 (24...♗d7 25.exd6 ♗xd6 26.♖c5) 25.♖c7+ ♗e8 26.exd6 ♖xd6 27.♖xa7 and the game was drawn 20 moves later.

● **6.f3** looks harmless but after 6...♗b6 7.♗e2 ♗c6 8.♗bc3!? Black must avoid 8...♗xd4 9.♗xd4 ♗xd4 10.♗xb5 ♗b6 11.♗f4! e5!? (11...d6 12.♗a4 ♗d7 13.♖c1±) 12.♗xe5 ♗b4+ 13.♗e2 0-0 14.♗b3 when Black had insufficient compensation for the pawn in Sutter-Boog, Bern 1993.

Instead of 6...♗b6, Black should simply play 6...a6.

6...e6

6...♗b6! seems to exert a fatal attraction for many players with Black in this line. Some examples after 7.♗gf3 e6 (here 7...♗c6?! is even worse in view of 8.d5 ♗b4 9.♗b1 e6 10.a3 ♗a6 11.0-0! exd5 12.exd5 – 12.e5!? is thematic and strong as well – 12...♗xd5 13.♖e1+ ♗e6 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♖d8 16.b4! ♗e7 17.♗e3 ♗b8 18.♗d4 0-0 19.♗h5 g6 20.♗xb5 and White won in Soppe-Giardelli, Buenos Aires 1983)

● 8.♗e2 ♗c6



9.d5! (even 9.♗b3 ♗b4 10.♗b1 a5 11.a3 ♗a6 12.♗g5 looks very healthy for White, e.g. 12...d5 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.0-0 a4 15.♗bd2 ♗c7 16.♗d3 ♗h6 17.e5 f5 18.b4 ♗c6 19.♖ac1 ♗d7 20.♖c3 ♗a6 21.♖fc1 and

White controlled the board in Leitao-Lima, Rio de Janeiro 1998. If White wants to be a little extravagant there is also 9.0-0!? ♗xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.♗b3! with a strong initiative for the pawn) 9...♗b4 10.♗b1 exd5 11.a3 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♗c2 13.♗xc2 ♖xc2 14.♗d3 ♖c8 15.e5 ♗e4 16.♗b3 ♗c5 17.♗xc5 ♗xc5 18.b4 ♗e7 19.♗e3 ♗a6 20.♗d4 ♖c4 21.f4?! (after 21.♗f5! White would have been well on top) 21...0-0 22.f5 f6! 23.e6 dxe6 24.♗xe6 ♖f7 25.♗d4 ♗d6 26.♖ae1 ♖e7 27.♖e2 ♗c6 (27...♗c8!±) 28.♖fe1 a6 29.♗c5 d4!? (29...♗xe6 30.♖xe6 ♗xc5+ 31.bxc5 ♗xc5+ 32.♗h1 ♖c1∞) 30.♗d8



30...♖e3?!, missing 30...♗xg2+! 31.♖xg2 ♖xe1+ 32.♗f2 ♖e3 and Black has enough counterplay to draw. After 30...♖e3 a draw was agreed in Groszpeter-Rogers, Biel Open 1991, a time troubled White forgetting that after 31.♗xc6 ♖xd3 32.♖e8+ ♗f7 33.♗d8 is checkmate.

● **8.0-0** (this is the main line in ECO) 8...♗c6 9.d5! ♗b4 10.♗b1 exd5 11.e5! ♗e4 – 12.a3!? ♗xd2 13.♗xd2 ♗a6 14.♗f4 h6 15.b4 ♗c7 16.♗e3 ♗e6 17.♗xb6? (17.♗g4!) 17...♗xf4 and Black had survived the worst in Molzahn-Schwab, St Veit 2002.

– 12.♗b3 a5 13.♗e3 (soon all the downsides in Black's position will become

clear: the queen is misplaced on b6, the Black knights can be forced back and the b5 pawn will be a target) 13...♖c7 14.a3 ♘a6 15.♗d3 ♗c6 16.♞c1 a4 17.♗bd4 ♜b7



18.e6!! f6 19.♗xc6 (19.♗e5! fxe5 20.♜h5+ ♔d8 – 20...g6 21.♜xe5 – 21.♗xc6+ dxc6 22.♗xe4 was even more devastating) 19...dxc6 20.♗d4 ♗ec5 21.♜h5+ ♔d8 22.♞fd1 ♞c8 23.♗f5 ♞c7 24.♗f4 ♞e7 25.♗g3 ♜b6 26.♗xc6+! ♜xc6 27.♞xd5+! ♜xd5 28.♞d1 and soon 1-0 in Van der Sterren-Rogers, Wijk aan Zee II 1989. This was a game which gave 2...b5 a poor reputation, but the real culprit should have been 6...♜b6.

7.♗f3 a6 8.0-0 ♗e7



9.a4

The recommended recipe for White but the more modest 9.♜e2! should be preferred.

Then 9...d5 10.e5 ♗fd7 11.b3 leads to a far better version of the game for White – the b7 bishop will have real trouble entering the game. Nonetheless, this may be better for Black than 9.♜e2 d6 which could lead to the Crouch-Rogers game given in the next note.

9...bxa4

9...b4 is not (quite) as bad as its reputation. After 10.♜e2 d6 (10...d5 11.e5 ♗fd7 12.a5 leaves Black's queenside paralysed) 11.e5! dxe5 12.dxe5 ♗fd7? (12...♗d5 is far more natural, although Black has not yet solved the problem of what to do with his king) 13.♗e4 ♗d5 14.♞d1 ♗c6 15.♗f4 h6 (15...0-0 16.♗c4!) 16.♞ac1 ♜a5 17.♗c4! ♗b6 18.♗d6+ ♗xd6 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.exd6 ♗xf4 21.d7+! ♔e7 22.♜e4 ♗d5 (22...♜f5 23.♜xc6 ♗e2+ 24.♔f1 ♗xc1 25.♜d6+ ♔f6 26.♜d4+!+-) 23.♞xc6 ♜xa4 (23...♔xd7 24.♗e5+ ♔e7 25.♗xf7!) 24.♞dc1 and White had a winning attack in Crouch-Rogers, London Lloyds Bank Open 1992.

10.♜e2 d5! 11.e5 ♗fd7 12.♞xa4 ♗c6 13.♗b3 ♜b6



The sort of French-style position Black can happily play in this line. The weakness of the b4 square counterbalances any problems on a6 and chances are equal. The only game to have reached this position – Kozul-Laketic, Kladovo 1990 – saw the lower rated player draw.

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Rubinstein's Anti-Meran Variation



Let's play 6. ♖e5

Akiba Rubinstein's name is attached to numerous opening variations. With no attempt at completeness, how about the following, incredible, list: there is a Rubinstein Variation in the Nimzo-Indian, a Rubinstein Variation in the French, a Rubinstein Variation in the Four Knights Game, the strongest set-up for White against the Tarrasch Defence is Rubinstein's line, and not bad either is his a4-line in the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

Furthermore, there have been major contributions in the Queen's Gambit, and as a curiosity we could add 1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 (the Rubinstein-Nimzowitsch Variation). Then there are systems which do not bear his

name, but owe much to his unusual creative talent. How about 4.g3 in the Queen's Indian, and the subject of this article, the Meran Variation in the Slav?

It was Rubinstein who devised the Meran set-up in his games versus Teichmann (Carlsbad 1923) and Grünfeld (Merano 1924). The latter game gained prominence in the nomenclature of chess openings. The Meran is of course a tough theoretical nut to crack.

However, if we accept the opening genius of Rubinstein (and who wouldn't after the above list), then we have our SOS answer. For Rubinstein himself opted for 6.♖e5 when facing the Meran as White!

□ Luc Winants

■ Sipke Ernst

Dutch team championship 2005/06

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.♗c3 d5 4.e3 e6
5.♗f3 ♗bd7

The starting position of the Meran Variation.
The normal move order is 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6
3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.e3 ♗bd7.

6.♗e5



As mentioned above, Rubinstein was fond of this move. White prepares a set-up with f4, ♗d3 and 0-0.

6...♗xe5

This is the main line. Black exchanges the knight before White gets a chance to play f4 (when fxе5 would be possible). White's pawn structure is fractured, but he gains space in the centre and on the kingside.

Black has several other defensive options at his disposal:

- 6...♗d6 7.f4 0-0 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗b4 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 c5 12.0-0 b5 13.♗d6 c4 14.♗c2 ♗b6 15.♗xc8 ♗fxc8 16.♗f3 ♗c6 17.e4 ♗b6 18.g4, Black has mistreated the opening and was fighting a losing battle in Rubinstein-Lafora, Hamburg Olympiad 1930.

- 6...♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.f4 (here we see the basic idea of Rubinstein's 6.♗c5. This set-up is reminiscent of Pillsbury's plan

in the Orthodox Queen's Gambit) 8...c5 (8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 c5 10.0-0 ♗b6 11.♗b3 ♗d7 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♗f3 ♗b8 14.♗h1 ♗e7 15.♗xd7, and White is better, Ilinsky-Piesina, Barnaul 1984)



Now White is at a crossroads:

- 9.cxd5 cxd4 (or 9...♗xd5 10.♗xd5 exd5 11.0-0 ♗f6 12.♗d2 cxd4 13.exd4 ♗e4! 14.♗e3 ♗b6, and now instead of the dubious pawn sacrifice 15.f5 the modest 15.♗c2, Spielmann-Euwe, Amsterdam 1932) 10.exd4 ♗b6 11.0-0 (11.dxe6!? ♗xe6 12.♗c2) 11...♗bxd5 12.♗f3 b6 13.♗c6 ♗d6 14.♗xd5 exd5 15.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 16.f5 ♗b4 17.♗f4 ♗e8 18.♗d2 ♗xb2 19.♗b1 ♗xa2 20.♗a1 ♗b2 21.♗b1 ♗a2 22.♗a1 ½-½, Canal-Medina Garcia, Madrid 1951.

- If White does not release the tension with 9.0-0, then Black should play 9...♗b6 rather than 9...♗c7?! 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗f3 cxd4 12.exd4 ♗b6 13.♗e3 ♗xb2 14.♗f1 ♗a3 15.♗ab1 ♗d8 (15...a6 Gligoric) 16.♗f2 ♗d6 17.♗b5 ♗b8 18.♗g3, with ample compensation. Spielmann-Müller, Ebensee 1933.

- 6...dxc4. Now there are two approaches. White can play a kind of Queen's Gambit Accepted with 7.♗xd7 ♗xd7 8.♗xc4 c5 (8...♗c7?! 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4± Conquest-M.Piket, Erbalse 1981) 9.0-0 (9.d5 exd5 10.♗xd5 ♗c6 is, if anything, better for

Black, Spielmann-Bogoljubow, Zandvoort 1936) 9...♗c6 (9...cxd4 10.exd4 ♗c6, and now perhaps 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 13.d5) 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.a3 0-0 12.b4 ♗e7 13.♗b2 ♖c8 equal, Bezman-Fish, Moscow 1995.

Or he can continue in the style of Rubinstein with 7.f4



– 7...♗xe5?! 8.fxe5 ♗d5 (if 8...♗d7 then Barden's 9.♗e2, and not 9.♗xc4 ♗xc5!) 9.♗xc4 f5 10.0-0 b5 11.♗d3 g6 12.e4 and White had a clear edge in the game Schuurman-Timmermans, Hooageveen 2002.
– 7...♗b4 8.♖c2 c5 9.♗xc4 ♖b6? (9...cxd4 10.exd4 0-0) 10.a3 cxd4 11.exd4 ♗d6 12.♖e2 a6? (12...0-0 13.♗e3±) 13.♗xf7, and White won in a few moves, Conquest-Moser, Embalse 1981.

As readers of New In Chess Magazine have pointed out, 8.♗xc4 is also good, for, after 8...♗e4, White can favourably sac a pawn with 9.0-0.

– 7...c5 8.♗xc4 ♗e7 9.0-0-0 10.♖h1 cxd4 11.exd4 ♗b6 12.♗b3 ♗bd5 13.♖f3 (White's isolated pawn set-up, although uncommon, is not so bad – remember Botvinnik-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936?) 13...♗d7 14.f5 ♗c6 15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♖e2 and White is better, Ross-Delgado Crespo, Cienfuegos 1997.

● 6...a6. This position usually arises in

practice via a different move order (either via the Chebanenko Variation or via the Meran with 5...a6 instead of 5...♗bd7). 7.f4, and now:



– 7...c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗e2 (9.♗d3) 9...cxd4 10.exd4 b5 11.0-0 ♗b7, and here 12.♗f3 would have been stronger than the game continuation 12.a4?! b4 13.♗b1 ♗d6, Schmaus-Unzicker, Riedenburg 1947.

– 7...♗b4 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 10.♗e5 ♗b7 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 c5 13.0-0 c4?! 14.♗c2 ♗xe5 15.fxe5 ♖d5 16.♖c2 and White dominates, Ward-Vea, Caleta 2005.

– 7...dxc4 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗b3 ♖c7 10.♖f3 ♗b7 11.♖h3. The opening has been a big success. Rubinstein won after 11...♗xe5 12.fxe5 ♗d5 13.♗xd5 cxd5 14.♗d2 ♗c7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖a1 ♖b6 17.♗c2 g6 18.♗d3 a5? 19.♖f3 b4 20.♖cf1 ♖g7 (20...♗a6 21.♗xa6 ♖xa6 22.♖h6 ♖d3 23.♖h3 g5 24.e4!) 21.♗e1 f5 22.exf6+ ♗xf6 23.♖xf6!, 1-0 Rubinstein-Vajda, Budapest 1926.

● 6...♗b4 7.♗d2 (now 7.f4? ♗xe5 8.fxe5 ♗e4 is just bad for White) 7...0-0 (7...♗xe5 8.dxe5 ♗d7 9.f4 transposes, while 9.♖g4 0-0 10.cxd5 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 exd5 12.♖d4!? is an extra option) 8.♗e2 (8.♗d3 is inaccurate after 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗d7 10.cxd5 ♗xe5 11.♗xh7+ ♖xh7 12.♖h5+ ♖g8 13.♖xe5 exd5, and Black is better.

Schoonmaker-Stripunsky, Oklahoma 2004; 8.f4 c5 9.cxd5 cxd4 10.exd4 ♖b6 11.♗d3 ♜bxd5 12.0-0 ♗b6, and Black was doing fine, Taylor-Shulman, Los Angeles 2002) 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗d7



- 10.cxd5 exd5 11.f4 a5 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.a3 ♗c5 14.♗d3 f6 15.♗c2 was approximately equal in Dzagnidze-Ovod, Dresden 2004.
 - 10.f4 ♗c5 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♗e4 13.♗c2 ♗b6 14.♗d3 g6 and here Bezman-Berezin, Alushta 1999, ended in a premature draw. It would appear that White has a pleasant edge in the final position. Note that 14...♗xe3+ 15.♖h1 is better for White, who obtains attacking possibilities with 16.♗ae1 or 16.♗f3, while 14...♗xc3? 15.♗xh7+ ♖h8 16.♗f3 ♗e4 17.♗h3 f5 18.♗g6+ ♖g8 19.♗e2 just wins.
- 7.dxe5 ♗d7 8.f4**



The endgame after 8.cxd5 ♗xe5?! 9.f4 ♗g6 10.dxc6 ♗xd1+ 11.♗xd1 is more pleasant for White. 11...bxc6 12.♗d2 e5 13.♗c1 exf4 14.exf4 ♗d6 15.g3 ♗e6 16.♗c4, and Rubinstein won after a long struggle (against Mikenas in Prague 1931). However, Black should play 8...exd5 9.f4 ♗b4.

8...a6?!

This is a useful move in principle, and if Chebanenko's 4...a6 is playable, then why not 8...a6 here? However, with this slow move Ernst just allows White to play his ideal set-up (cxd5, ♗d3 and 0-0). Some minor alternatives:

- 8...f6?! 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗d3 f5 11.0-0 ♗c5 12.♗c2 with a small advantage for White, Liascovich-Hungaski, Buenos Aires 2003.
- 8...f5 9.♗e2 a6 10.0-0 b5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.a4 b4 13.♗xd5! exd5 14.♗xd5 ♗b6 15.♗c6+ ♗d7 16.♗h5+ g6 17.♗xg6+ hxg6 18.♗xg6+ ♖e7 19.♗f6+ ♖e8 20.♗xh8, and White should, but didn't, win in Kraus-Heinrich, Kirchheim 1947.
- 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♗b6 12.♗c2 a6 13.a4 ♗e7 14.♗f3 g6 15.♗h3 ♗c8 16.♗d2 b4 17.♗e4 c5 18.b3 ♗d5 19.♗e1 ♗b7 20.♗d2 ♗xg2 21.♗xa6! ♗xa6 22.♖xg2 ♗e2+ 23.♗f2 ♖b6 24.♗e1 ♗a6 25.♗c1 ♗e2?! 26.♗c4 ♗xc2 27.♗xc2, White has an endgame edge and won after a long game in Rubinstein-Rosselli del Turco, Prague Olympiad 1931.
- 8...♖b6 9.♗b3 (9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗e2 ♗h4+ 11.g3 ♗h3 12.♗f1 ♗g4 13.♗xg4 ♗xg4 1/2-1/2, Bezman-Popovich, Alushta 1999) 9...♗e7 10.♗d2 f6 11.exf6 gxf6 12.0-0-0 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♗xc4 14.♗xc4 ♗d7 15.♗e4 b5 16.♗d3 f5 17.♗f6+!, and White won quickly in Nimzowitsch-Mieses, Frankfurt 1930.
- 8...♗c5 9.♗d2 a6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♗d3 ♗a7 12.0-0 ♗c5 13.♗c2 d4 14.exd4 ♗xd4+ 15.♖h1 ♗d7 16.♗e2 ♗c6 17.♗c3 ♗d7

18.b4 ♖a4 19.♗xa4! ♗xa4 20.♗xa7 ♞xa7 21.f5 ♗c6 (21...exf5 22.e6 fxe6 23.♗xa4 ♞xa4 24.♞xe6+) 22.♞ad1 ♞e7 23.b5 ♗d7 24.♞e3 ♞a8 25.f6 gxf6 26.♗e4 1-0, Garcia Palermo-Huerta, Bayamo 1985.

The two main replies are:

● 8...♗b4 9.♗d2 (clearly stronger than 9.cxd5, as proven by Botvinnik in his game against Makogonov: 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗d3 ♗c5! 11.♗c2 – now Black has an annoying check, instead 11.0-0 would have been preferable, according to Botvinnik – 11...♞h4+ 12.g3 – 12.♖f1 Botvinnik – 12...♞h3, and Black had the edge in the well-known game Makogonov-Botvinnik, Sverdlovsk 1943).



Here Black should not play 9...dxc4 because of 10.♗e4.

– 9...f5 10.a3 ♗c5 11.b4 d4 12.♗a2!? dxe3 13.♗c1 ♗e7 14.♗xe3 with a space advantage in the game Spielmann-Pokorny, Sliac 1932.

– 9...0-0 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♞c2 a6 12.♗d3 ♞h4+ (our familiar manoeuvre again) 13.g3 ♞h3 14.♗f1 ♞h6 (14...♞h5 15.♗e2 ♞h3 16.0-0-0) 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♗g2 b5 17.0-0 ♗b6, with near-equality, Boleslavsky-Sakharov, Kiev 1958.

– 9...♞b6 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♞d8 14.♞c2 ♞c5 15.♗e2 b6 16.♞ad1 ♗f8 17.♗c1 ♗b7 18.♞d4 ♞e7

19.♞fd1 c5 20.♞d6, White is superior, Rubinstein-Vidmar, San Remo 1930.

● 8...♗e7 9.cxd5. Now is the right moment to clarify the situation in the centre. How should Black recapture?



– 9...exd5 10.♗d3 ♗c5 11.♗c2 Compared to Makogonov-Botvinnik above the bishop is not on b4 but on e7, so Black cannot play 11...♞h4+ (as Botvinnik could), 11...f5 12.0-0-0 13.b3 g6 14.♗b2 ♗e4 (or 14...b6 15.b4 ♗e4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♞b3+ ♞f7 18.♞fd1 Makogonov-Yudovich, Leningrad 1939) 15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♞e2 ♗e6 17.g4 Bondarevsky-Belavenets, Leningrad 1939.

– 9...cxd5 10.♗d3 ♗c5 (10...0-0 11.0-0 f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♞e2 a6 14.e4 d4 15.♗d1 b6 16.e5 ♗d5 17.♞h5 g6 18.♗xg6!, Welling-Michalczak, Zwolle 1993) 11.♗c2 a5 12.0-0 g6 13.e4 (13.b3 looks like an improvement) 13...d4 14.♗a4 b6 (Black has 14...d3!) 15.♗xc5 bxc5 16.♗d3 a4 17.f5, with unclear play in Tartakower-Maroczy, Nice 1930.

9.cxd5

For curiosity's sake, in the game Meszaros-Tokos, Slovakia 1998, there followed: 9.♞f3, provoking the following combination: 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗xe5 11.fxe5 ♞h4+ 12.g3 ♞xc4 13.♞f1 (White is virtually winning!) 13...♗d7 14.♞xf7+ ♗d8, and now instead of the game continuation 15.♞xf8+?,

White wins with 15.e4 ♖b4 16.♗g5+ ♜c7 17.0-0.

9...cxd5

After 9...cxd5 White does not play 10.♗d3?! ♘c5 11.♗c2?! ♜h4+ 12.g3 ♜h3, but 10.e4 or 10.♗e2!? ♗c5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♜b1.

10.♗d3 b5

Perhaps the modest 10...♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 f5.

11.0-0



11...g6

So as to nip in the bud White's attack along the b1-h7 diagonal.

12.b3 ♗g7 13.♗b2 ♘c5 14.♗c2 b4

White is better after 14...♗b7 15.b4 ♘d7 (15...♗e4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♗d4) 16.a4 bxa4 17.♗xa4.

15.♗e2 ♗e4 16.♗d4

White preserves all the positional pluses of his position. He will chase the knight from e4 with ♗g3 and if necessary ♜f3. However, very attractive was also 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♜xd8+ ♜xd8 18.♞fd1+, which yields White an appreciable endgame advantage.

16...♗b7 17.♗g3 ♞c8

Better was 17...♗xg3 18.hxg3 h5, restraining White on the kingside and aiming for the march of the h-pawn.

18.♗d3 ♘c3?

Again 18...♗xg3 19.hxg3 h5. Castling 18...0-0 is met by 19.♗xe4 dxe4 20.♗c4.

19.♜f3



19...f5?

This aggravates Black's problems.

20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♜g4

With the double threat of 22.♜xe6+ and 22.♗xg6+.

21...♜d7

This defends against both threats, but still allows Winants to finish in style:

22.f5! e5

Black is beyond survival: 22...exf5? 23.♗xf5+, and 22...gxf5 23.♗xf5.

23.fxg6+ ♜c7 24.♗h5 exd4 25.♞xf6 ♜b8

Or 25...hxg6 26.♜f4+ ♜d7 27.♜d6+ ♜e8 28.♗g7 mate.

26.g7



Black resigned, since there is nothing to play for after either 26...♞g8 27.♗xh7 or 26...♞e8 27.♞f7 dxc3 28.♗f6.

CHAPTER 16

Sergey Tiviakov

English Four Knights – 4.d4 e4!?



1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 e4

With Black it is important to know what to do in the English Four Knights after 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4. I speak from experience. When I encountered this move for the first time in 1993 against Ilya Smirin (Rostov-on-Don) I had no special recipe and went for the traditional 4...exd4 5.Nxd4 Nxb4 and after 6.Ng5 received a worse position. I had to suffer a lot to make a draw.

□ Ilya Smirin

■ Sergey Tiviakov

Rostov on Don 1993

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4 Nxb4 6.Ng5 h6 7.Nh4

8.Nc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.c5 Nxe7 11.e3 Nxe5 12.Nd4 Nxe4 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.Nc1 Nxe6 15.Nd3 Nc5 16.Nb1 Nxd7



17.♠d1 ♖xd4 18.♗xd4 ♜ab8 19.0-0
 ♜b2 20.♙g3 ♜b7 21.♞fd1 ♚e7 22.h4
 a5 23.a4 ♞d8 24.♙e4 c5 25.♞4d2
 ♞xd2 26.♞xd2 d5 27.♙f3 ♜d6 28.♞b2
 ♞c8 29.♞b6 ♜f5 30.♞b7+ ♚f6 31.♙c7
 d4 32.cxd4 cxd4 33.e4 ♜xh4 34.♙e2
 g5 35.g3 ♜g6 36.f4 gxf4 37.gxf4
 ♞xc7 38.♞xc7 ♜xf4 39.♚f2 ♜xe2
 40.♚xe2 ♙b3 41.♞c6+ ♚g7 42.♚d3
 ♙xa4 43.♞c5 ♙d7 44.♞xa5 ♚g6
 45.♚xd4 h5 46.♚e3 h4 47.♚f4 h3
 48.♞g5+ ♚f6 ½-½

After that game I spent some time to find the most convincing way to equalize. And it is 4...e4 which I can wholeheartedly recommend to the readers of this book. A note of warning: some of the lines arising after 4...e4 are sharp, and in one line Black is required to sacrifice the material. So study everything carefully!

After 4...e4 White has four different possibilities:

- A) 5.d5?!
- B) 5.♙e5
- C) 5.♙d2
- D) 5.♙g5

Variation A

- Fricis Apscheneek
- Savielly Tartakower
Folkestone Olympiad 1933

1.c4 e5 2.♙c3 ♜c6 3.♙f3 ♜f6 4.d4 e4
 5.d5?!

This is an innocuous line. Simply taking with the pawn on f3 leads to the better ending for Black.

5...exf3 6.dxc6 fxf2 7.cxd7+ ♜xd7
 8.♜xd7+ ♙xd7

The ending favours Black since White has more groups of pawns.

9.♙xg2



9...c6

After simply 9...0-0-0!? Black is just better.

10.♙g5 ♙e6 11.b3 ♙b4 12.♞c1 h6

Black could have refrained from this move and castled immediately with 12...0-0-0 with the better chances.

13.♙d2 0-0-0 14.♙b1 ♞xd2!?

Of course, it was not necessary to sacrifice the exchange. Black could have just taken with the bishop on d2, keeping the better chances.

15.♜xd2 ♞d8

Black has sufficient compensation. Unfortunately this game is not complete in my database. Eventually Black won, Tartakower was much stronger than his opponent.

Variation B

- Bogdan Lalic
- Larry Christiansen
Frankfurt Chess Classic 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♙c3 ♜f6 3.♙f3 ♜c6 4.d4 e4
 5.♙e5

This poses no real problems for Black either, after

5...♙b4!

This diminishes the pressure on the e4-pawn. Please note that 5...♙c7?! looks

tempting (trying to win the knight e5). However, after 6.♗g5! Black can't win the knight on e5 and has to spend some time to protect the pawn on e4.

6.♗g5

Other moves don't promise any advantage either: 6.♘xc6 dxc6 is equal, and after 6.♗d2 ♗xc3 7.♗xc3 e3!? Black can even fight for the initiative, sacrificing a pawn. Note that Black can also simply equalize with 7...0-0. The text move 6.♗g5 is logical, pinning the opponent, and increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn.

6...h6 7.♗h4

Play is equal after 7.♘xc6 dxc6 8.♗xf6 ♗xf6. After 7.♗xf6 ♗xf6 8.♘xc6 Black has the additional option of 8...c3!?

7...e3!?



This is an incredibly interesting move. As we will see, this sacrifice is typical for this variation, slowing the development of the White pieces. Black also gains the control over the e4-square. Other moves such as 7...0-0 and 7...♗e7 8.♘xc6 dxc6 are enough for equality.

8.fxe3 g5 9.♗g3 ♘e4 10.♗c2

Or 10.♗d3 f5 with compensation.

10...♘xg3

I can't understand why Black exchanges his strong knight on e4 which paralyzes White's position. Much stronger is 10...f5!?

11.♘xc6?!

White returns the favours and commits a mistake. After 11.hxg3! ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♗e7 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.♗xc3 White is better. He is one pawn up, although the game is far from clear considering White's fractured pawn structure.

11...dxc6 12.hxg3 ♗e7

Here 12...♗c6!?! is interesting.

13.e4

After 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.♗xc3 ♗d7 Black finishes his development first.

13...♗g4 14.0-0-0?!

Instead 14.a3 ♗xc3+ 15.bxc3 0-0-0 with compensation for Black should have been preferred, since after the text Black is better. White's centre is too weak, and he is also behind in development.

14...0-0-0 15.e5 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♗e4



Black is better after 17.♗a4 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♘b8.

17...♗g7?

A serious mistake allowing White to free his pieces. After the correct 17...♗e6 Black has the upper hand.

18.a3 ♗e7 19.♘f2 ♗e6 20.e3

White is slightly better now.

20...♘b8

Probably disappointed by his mistake on move 17, Black allows the blockade on the

kingside and in the centre. After the correct 20...h5 the game would not have been all that clear.

21.g4!

Now Black can't prevent the transfer ♗d3-f5.

21...♞hf8 22.♗d3 ♗g8 23.♗f5

White is much better now. The rest of the game is hardly interesting for our purpose anymore. White eventually won after a long struggle.

23...♞fe8 24.♗e4 ♗f8 25.♖b1 a6
26.♞c1 c5 27.dxc5 ♞e5 28.♞hd1
♞de8 29.♞d7 ♞e7 30.♞cd1 ♞e5
31.c6 b6 32.♞a4 ♗g7 33.♞1d2 ♖a7
34.♗c3 ♞xd7 35.cxd7 ♞d8 36.♞c6
♞c5 37.♞xc5 bxc5 38.♗e4 ♖b6
39.b3 ♗e5 40.♖c2 ♖c6 41.♞d1 ♗d6
42.♞h1 ♗f8 43.♞d1 ♗f7 44.♗c3 ♗g7
45.♗e4+ ♖b6 46.♗d5+ ♗xd5
47.♞xd5 ♗f6 48.♗f5 ♞f8 49.e4 c6
50.♞d6 ♖c7 51.♞e6 ♗d8 52.♞xh6
♞f6 53.♞h7 ♗d6 54.♞h8 ♖c7 55.e5
♞f7 56.♗d3 a5 57.♗e4 ♞e7 58.e6
♞g7 59.♗e5 ♞e7 60.♞xd8 ♖xd8
61.♗f6 ♞xd7 62.exd7 ♖c7 63.♗e7
♖b7 64.d8♞ ♖a6 65.♗c8+ 1-0

Variation C

□ Mikhail Botvinnik

■ Salo Flohr

Moscow (5th match game) 1933

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.d4 e4
5.♗d2

This allows Black to exchange the central pawns.

5...♗xd4

Black does not need to play 5...♗b4 6.e3 with a slight plus for White.

6.♗dxe4 ♗e6

In the game White gets an extra possibility to

complicate a game. If you like simple and easy play go for 6...♗xe4! After 7.♗xe4 (or 7.♞xd4 ♗xc3 8.♞xc3 d5! with equal chances) 7...♗b4+! 8.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9.♞xd2 ♗e6 10.g3 the same position is reached as in the game.

7.g3

After 7.♗xf6+ ♞xf6 8.♗d5 ♞g6, followed by ...c6, the position is unclear.

7...♗xe4 8.♗xe4 ♗b4+!



It is important to exchange the dark-squared bishops, after which Black will have a slightly passive position but without any weaknesses. His bishop c8 will be better than the bishop g2. Thus, the position is equal!

9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♞xd2 0-0 11.♗g2 d6 12.0-0

According to Botvinnik 12.♞d1 ♗d7 13.c5 f5 14.cxd6 fxe4 15.dxc7 can be met by 15...♞f6!.

12...♗d7 13.♗c3 ♗c6 14.♗d5 a5 15.e4 ♗c5 16.♞fe1 ♞e8 17.♞ad1 a4

Botvinnik remarks that 17...♗xd5 18.♞xd5 ♞f6 is not good for Black after 19.e5! ♞xe5 20.♞xe5 ♞xe5 21.♞xe5 dxe5 22.♞d5 and White is slightly better.

18.♞e3 ♗d7!

A strong move according to Botvinnik! The bishop stands better on c6, where it will pressurize the c4-pawn.



19.♘c3 ♖e6 20.♗d4 ♜f6 21.♙f1 ♜e7
 22.♗d5 ♜f7 23.♞de1 c6 24.♙f4
 Or 24.♗b6 ♞a6 25.♗xd6, and now:
 – 25...♗e7 26.♗xe7 ♞xe7 27.♗d5!
 – 25...♗f8 26.♗xf8+ (26.♗c7 ♞c7 27.♗d6
 ♞f7 (Botvinnik) 28.♗xf8+ ♞xf8 29.♗d5±)
 26...♗xf8 27.♗d5 cxd5 28.cxd5±.
 – 25...♞xb6! (stronger than the above
 moves that Botvinnik gave) 26.♗xc5 ♞xb2
 with equal chances.
 24...♗c7 25.♗d3 b6 26.♗b4 ♙f7
 27.♗c3 ♞ad8 28.♗c2 ♞e7 29.♗d4
 ♙g6 The position is equal. 30.f3 Or
 30.♙g2 ♞de8 31.e5! dxe5 (31...♞xe5
 32.♗xc6 ♞xe3 33.♞xe3 ♞xc3 34.♗xe3
 ♗f8) 32.♗xc6 ♞d7 33.♙d5+ Botvinnik.
 30...♞de8 31.b4 axb3 32.axb3 ♙e6
 33.♗f5 ♙xf5 34.exf5 ♙g5 35.♙g2
 ♞xe3 36.♞xe3 ♞xe3 37.♗xe3 ♗f8
 38.f4 ♙f7 39.b4



39...d5! 40.cxd5 c5! 41.bxc5 bxc5
 42.♗a3 ♗d6 43.♙f1 ♗f7 44.♙d3 c4
 45.♙c2 c3 46.♗b4! ♗c4 47.♗xc3
 ♗c5+ 48.♙h1 ♗xd5+ ½-½

Variation D

5.♙g5 is the most natural move in the position. And here comes the moment when knowledge is essential. Black should not be afraid to sacrifice a pawn. After 5...h6! White has three possible moves:

- D1) 6.♗h3
- D2) 6.♗gxe4
- D3) 6.d5

Variation D1

□ Suat Atalik
 ■ Sergey Tiviakov
 Beijing 1997

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♙c6 4.d4 e4
 5.♙g5 h6 6.♗h3?!
 With such a passive move White cannot
 hope for any advantage.
 6...♙b4 7.e3
 Not good is 7.d5?!. After 7...♙xc3+ 8.bxc3
 ♗e5 9.♗d4 d6 his pawns are weak, and the
 knight on h3 is out of play.
 7...♙xc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 9.♗f4
 Dubious is 9.g3?! ♙g4.
 9...0-0 10.♙e2 ♞e8 11.h4



I would prefer 11.0-0, when Black should play b7-b6 and try to attack the weak pawn on c4 by ♖a6, ♖a5 with slightly better chances. After the text White is threatening to push the pawns on the kingside, so I have no time to attack the c4-pawn.

11...♖e7 12.a4 ♖g6 13.h5!?

After 13.♖xg6 fxg6 Black obtains play along the f-file, targeting the pawn on f2. But after 13.h5 there is no longer any danger of the advance of White's pawns on the kingside.

13...♖f8

Worse is 13...♖xf4?! 14.exf4±.

14.a5 ♖e6

The knight aims for g5 where it will block any White play on the kingside.

15.♖xe6 ♖xe6 16.f4

White does not castle since after 16.0-0 ♖d7 he cannot prevent the exchange of the white-squared bishops, when the h5-pawn will become very weak.

16...♖d7

Here 16...exf3 17.gxf3 was possible, but the arising position is unclear – White gets a very strong centre.

17.♖h4

White has to prevent the exchange of the bishops, otherwise he is simply worse.

17...♖e7 18.♖h2 ♖d7 19.♖h4 ♖e7



20.♖d2?

A serious mistake, White underestimates

Black's play. He should have repeated the moves. Now his position goes downhill.

20...♖h7 21.♖h1 f5 22.♖b3 ♖ab8 23.♖c1 ♖f6 24.♖a3 b6 25.axb6 axb6 Threatening ...b5.

26.d5

But now the pawns c3 and c4 are fixed.

26...♖f7 27.♖f2 ♖a8 28.c5

With so many weakness in his camp, White decides to sacrifice a pawn to get some counterplay along the a1-h8 diagonal.

28...bxc5 29.c4 ♖eb8 30.♖c3 ♖a6 31.♖b2 ♖ab6 32.♖a2

After 32.♖ab1 the pin is very unpleasant.

32...♖b3 33.♖c1 ♖e8 34.♖a1 ♖d7 35.♖c3?!

Here 35.♖xf6 ♖xf6 36.♖xf6 gxf6 37.♖a7 was much more stubborn. Black still has to work hard to win.

35...♖e8 36.♖a7 ♖d8 37.♖a5 ♖b1

Creating an attack against the white king. Black wins without too much problems.

38.♖h3

Or 38.♖xb1 ♖xb1 39.♖a8 ♖h4+ mating.

38...♖c1 39.♖a3 ♖c2 40.♖a1? This loses by force. 40.♖h1 was necessary.

40...♖b3 The rest is easy and not so interesting. 41.♖xg7 41.♖a5 ♖bb2 winning.

41...♖xg7 42.♖a8 ♖c8 43.♖g3 ♖bb2 44.♖b8 ♖xe2+ 45.♖f1 ♖h4 46.♖xc8+ ♖h7 0-1

Variation D2

□ Eduard Gerstenfeld

■ Andor Lilienthal

Moscow ch-URS 1940

1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♖f6 3.♖f3 ♖c6 4.d4 e4 5.♖g5 h6 6.♖gxe4

This leads to an equal ending more or less by force.

6...♖xe4 7.♖xe4 ♖h4



The point of the whole line, Black regains the pawn. Worse is 7...d5 8.c3, which is better for White.

8.c3

8.♞d3?! is very dangerous for White after 8...d5! 9.cxd5 ♖b4 10.♞b1 ♗f5 11.♗d6+



– Now after 11...cxd6 12.♞xf5 g6 13.♞f4! ♗c2+ 14.♗d1 ♞xf4 15.♗xf4 ♗:xa1 16.e3 a6 17.♗d3 ♗d7 18.♗d2 White had two pawns for the exchange: his chances are to be preferred. Smirin-Johannessen, Istanbul 2000.

– Therefore stronger is: 11...♗xd6! 12.♞xf5 g6! 13.♞b1 ♞xd4, when my analysis reveals that play is equal after 14.e4!?

♞c5 15.♗d1 ♞xf2 16.a3 ♞d4+ (or 16...♗a6 Tiviakov) 17.♗e1 ♗a6. Instead the game B.Kovacevic-Zelcic, Bizovac 2001, went 14.a3 0-0-0 15.♗d2 ♗xd5 16.e3 ♞f6 17.♞c2 ♞he8 18.♗e2 ♗b8 19.0-0 ♗f4 Black is already slightly better,

and won after 20.♗f3 ♗h3+ 21.♗h1 ♗g5 22.♗c3 ♞e7 23.♗e2 ♗e4 24.♗gl f5 25.♞ae1 h5 26.♗d3? ♗xh2+ 27.♗xh2 ♞d6+ 0-1.

8...♞xd4 9.e3 9.♞xd4 ♗xd4 is about equal too. **9...♞xd1+ 10.♗xd1 ♗e7 11.♗d5 ♗d8** The ending is equal. **12.♗d2** In Zapata-Morovic Fernandez, Tunis izt 1985, the players called it a day after 12.b3 d6 13.♗b2 0-0 14.♗d3 a5 1/2-1/2. **12...d6 13.♗c3 0-0 14.♗e2 ♗e5 15.♗d2 c6 16.♗f4 ♞e8 17.♞hd1 ♗g4 18.b3 a5 19.h3 ♗f5 20.♗e1 ♗c7**

And after a long game (86 moves) and a fine exchange sacrifice by Lilienthal the game ended peacefully.

Variation D3

□ Zahar Efimenko

■ Julen Arizmendi

Gibraltar 2006

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.d4 e4 5.♗g5 h6 6.d5

The latest try by White to find an advantage in this variation.

6...hxg5

This is forced as 6...♗a5?! is bad. After 7.♗gx4 ♗xe4 (7...♗xc4 8.♞d4±) 8.♗xe4 ♗xc4 9.♞d4 White has a huge advantage.

7.dxc6



7...g4

After 7...bxc6 8.♗xg5 White is slightly better, the pawn on e4 is weak and it is not easy to get rid off the pin.

In my opinion, 7...♗c5! is the strongest move in the position: 8.cxb7 (8.♖a4 ♗b4+ 9.♗c3 ♗c5 is a repetition, but Black may try 9...bxc6!?) 8...♗xb7. Now nothing is gained by 9.♖a4 ♗b4+ 10.♗c3 ♗g4 (10...♗c5 is again a repetition). After 9.e3 the old game Kostic-Opocensky, Prague 1931, continued with 9...♗e7. Black should prefer 9...♗d6!?, followed by ...♗e5, with a strong initiative. The plan chosen by Arizmendi Martinez, although very spectacular, is less strong. Luckily for him his opponent was absolutely out of form on that day (or, maybe, he strongly underestimated his opponent).

8.cxb7 ♗xb7 9.♗f4 e3!?

Instead 9...♖h5 10.♗e3 ♗f6 11.♗f4 (11.♗d4 c5∞) is at least equal for Black, while 9...♗b8!? also deserves serious attention.

10.♗xe3 g3 11.fxg3 ♗g4

Black has a certain amount of compensation for his two pawns.

12.♗d4 ♗xe3 13.♗xe3+ ♗e7 14.♗d3

I would have castled immediately: 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.♗d3 and if White is not slightly better, then he should at least be able to defend successfully finishing his development and returning his extra material. A sample

line is 15...♗c6 16.♗d5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 etc.

14...♗b8 15.e4

Again 15.0-0-0 was better.

15...♗c6 16.♗e2?!

For me it is a mystery why White gave up the pawn and didn't castle. Yet again queenside castling was correct.

16...♗xb2 17.0-0 ♗c5+ 18.♖h1 ♗g5 19.♗f4?

Here 19.♗f5 was necessary, Black has compensation after 19...♗e3.

19...♗d6 20.♗g4??

A blunder. But after the correct 20.♗f3 ♗e5 Black is already much better.



20...♗xh2+ 21.♖g1

21.♖xh2 ♗h6+ 22.♗h4 ♗xh4+ 23.♖g1 ♗c5+ 24.♖f1 ♗h1 mate.

21...♗c5+

And White is mated.

CHAPTER 17

Hikaru Nakamura

Attacking the Sicilian Centre



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.a3!?

Statistically, the Sicilian is Black's best bet against 1.e4. Positionally, this should not come as a surprise. After all, Black's main idea is to exchange his c-pawn for White's d-pawn to obtain a healthy centre. From a strategical point of view, White would do much better to throw his b-pawn at Black's c-pawn. The Sicilian Wing Gambit is not quite sound though.

Recently, when confronted by an Accelerated Dragon, Hikaru Nakamura prepared the b4-thrust by playing 4.a3 and 5.♖b1. Typical of the young American showing his customary disrespect for classical chess you might say. However, Nakamura was following in the footsteps of Ljubomir Ljubojevic who

played these moves more than twenty years ago versus Tony Miles.

Hikaru Nakamura
 Ruben Felgaer
 Cuernavaca Young Masters 2006

1.e4 c5

As I learned from my game against GM Volokitin at the Lausanne Young Masters, my experiment with 2.♖h5 against the Sicilian should not be repeated any time soon. Although it is not effective against the Sicilian, I still feel that it is quite playable against 1...e5.

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.a3 ♗g7 5.♖b1

Chess is becoming quite predictable these days as most openings have been thoroughly analyzed. One way to avoid this is to experiment with less familiar structures that force both players to think for themselves. The idea behind this move is simply to play b4 and expand on the queenside immediately. This plan is more commonly used in the English Opening, when White already has a pawn on c4. Without the c4-pawn, this appears to be less logical, but as with all experiments, nothing can be determined without being tested.

5...♟f6

Surprisingly on move 5, we have already found our way out of theory! The best known and only other example in this line is: 5...e6 6.b4 b6 7.♟b2 d6 8.♟b5 ♟e7 9.♟d5 and so on, Ljubojevic-Miles, Tilburg 1985. See the next game.

6.b4 d6

Black could also try: 6...cxb4 7.axb4 d5 8.b5 ♟a5 9.exd5 ♟xd5 10.♟xd5 ♟xd5 11.♟d3 0-0 12.0-0, or 6...b6 7.bxc5 bxc5 8.♟c4 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.h3 ♟d7 11.♟b2. In both cases play is about equal.

7.bxc5 dxc5 8.♟b5 ♟d7 9.0-0 0-0



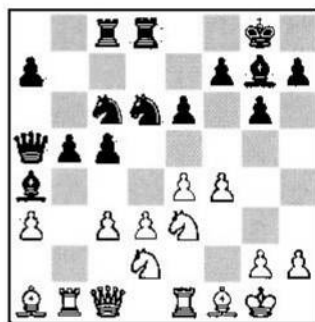
10.♟e1 ♟e8 11.♟d5 ♟d6 12.♟f1 e6 13.♟e3 ♟d4 14.d3 ♟a4

It appears that Black has seized the initiative by posting his pieces more aggressively. He

should now plan on playing ...f5 at the appropriate time to restrict White further.

15.♟b2 ♟a5 16.♟d2 ♟fd8 17.♟c1

No good is 17.e5?! ♟xe5 (17...♟6f5?! 18.♟xf5 exf5 19.♟xd4 cxd4 20.♟xb7 ♟xe5 21.♟b4 ♟f6 22.♟c4 ♟a6 23.g3 and White is perfectly fine in this position despite computer evaluations) 18.♟dc4 ♟xc4 19.♟xc4 ♟xh2+ 20.♟xh2 ♟c7+ 21.♟g1 ♟xc2 22.♟d2 ♟xb1 23.♟xb1 and Black is better. **17...♟ac8 18.c3 b5 19.♟a1 ♟c6 20.f4**



20...♟d7?

This is a terrible move as it lets White acquire even more space with e5 and in particular, the e4 square.

20...f5 is definitely the best move as it denies White the use of e4.

21.e5 ♟f5 22.♟e4 ♟b6 23.♟g4 ♟h8 24.♟h1 ♟cd8 25.♟b2!?

25.♟d2 is probably a little bit better, but I figured that even after the exchange sac on d3, I would retain a huge advantage.

25...♟xd3 26.♟xd3 ♟xd3 27.♟gf2 ♟d7 28.♟e2 c4 29.♟f3 ♟c2 30.♟b2 ♟xe4 31.♟xe4 ♟c5 32.♟b1 a6 33.♟e4 ♟a7 34.a4

From here on, White is in control. During the course of the next seven moves Felgaer proceeds to fall apart completely in bad time pressure.

34...h6 35.axb5 axb5 36.♟xb5 g5

37.fxg5 ♗xe5 38.♞c5 ♜c7 39.♝b5
 ♜fe7 40.h3 ♗g3 41.♞f1 hxg5
 42.♞xg5 ♗e5 43.♝xc4 ♜g6 44.♝e2
 ♗f4

Black resigned.

Note that our next high-profile clash was played in the famous Tilburg tournament which Miles won (shared with Hübner and Kortchnoi) despite suffering from severe back problems.

□ Ljubomir Ljubojevic
 ■ Tony Miles
 Tilburg 1985

(notes by Tony Miles in *New In Chess* 1985/11)

1.e4 c5 2.♗c3

Ljubo has been ducking main line Dragons against me since the Malta Olympiad 1980. He has twice tried the Closed Sicilian (London 1982 and Plovdiv 1983), but was fortunate to emerge with a single half point. I was intrigued to see what he had in mind this time.

2...♗c6 3.♗f3

A main line after all?

3...g6 4.a3!?

No! Of course a3 followed by b4 is quite a natural positional method of attacking a 'Sicilian centre'. I had considered it myself. The usual problem is that White cannot exert enough influence over b4 itself to get the advance in. But with the black bishop committed to g7 it becomes possible.

4...♗g7 5.♞b1 e6

Black can try to make White look silly with 5...a5, when it's hard to believe that the weakness of b5 is important. I preferred to develop quietly though.

6.b4 b6

Calmly maintaining control of d4.

7.♗b2 d6

Avoiding 7...♗ge7 8.♗b5.

8.♗b5 ♗e7 9.♗d5



Bashed out quickly by Ljubojevic. Contrary to popular opinion at the time I hadn't missed it. I had merely dismissed it as harmless. The only critical line I could see was 9...0-0 10.♗f6+ ♖h8 11.♗g5, which, purely on general grounds and positional instinct, I just didn't believe. Now, though, it was necessary to analyse thoroughly (I could always bail out with 9...♗f8). I thought for forty minutes. In the demo-hall my obituaries were being written.

9...0-0 10.♗f6+?!

On 10.♗f6 ♗xf6 is quite acceptable, but 10...exd5 11.♗xc6 ♗xf6 12.♗xa8 ♗a6 13.b5 (only move) 13...♝xa8 14.bxa6 dxc4 blows White off the board. Best, though, is the simple 10.♗g7.

10...♖h8 11.♗g5 h6

The only move. White is quite welcome to take the rook on f8, but how he can save his knights is quite another matter.

12.h4

A slight surprise. I expected 12.♝f3 when 12...a6 13.♗xc6 ♗xc6 14.♗gh7 e5 is winning for Black. 14.e5 is another try, but on say 14...♗b7 15.♗gh7 ♞b8 White might pick up an exchange or two, but whatever is left of his position will be a total disaster. Alternatively 12.♗gh7 a6! (always the key move; it indirectly attacks f6) and now

13. ♖xc6 ♜xc6 is familiar, while 13. ♖c4, say, allows 13... ♜g8 followed by taking the appropriate knight. Essentially a combination of ...a6 and ...e5 played at the right time refutes all White's rather speculative tries.

12...a6! 13. ♖xc6 ♜xc6 14. ♖f3 e5!

Closing both the long diagonals.

15. ♜fh7 ♜g8

Remarkably Ljubo had overlooked this simple move. After 15...hxg5 16.hxg5 Black must be very careful. Now though he simply wins two pieces for the rook. I guess my obituaries were being torn up.

16. ♜xf8 hxg5 17. ♜xg6 g4

The knight won't run away. If 18. ♖d3 ♖e6.

18. ♖e3 ♜d4 19. ♖g5

Hoping to find salvation in the endgame, but it's not very likely.

19... ♖xg5 20. hxg5 fxg6 21. bxc5 bxc5 22. ♖xd4 cxd4 23. d3

23. ♖b6 ♖f8 gets nowhere.

23... ♖f8 24. ♖e2 ♖a7 25. c4 dxc3



This move was widely criticised, and perhaps rightly. Black should win much more easily with rooks on and the c-file closed.

26. ♖hc1 ♖c7 27. ♖b3 ♜f7 28. ♖cxc3 ♖xc3 29. ♖xc3 ♖d7 30. ♖c7 ♖e6 31. ♖a7 ♖b5 32. a4

It must be correct to eliminate the a-pawns.
32... ♖xa4 33. ♖xa6 ♖d7 34. g3 ♖e7

35. ♖a8 ♖xg5 36. ♖b8 ♖c1 37. ♖b3 ♖f6 38. ♖b7 ♖e6 39. ♖c7 ♖a3 40. ♖a7 ♖c5 41. ♖c7 ♖d4 42. ♖f1

If 42. ♖c6 ♖e7. In the long run White cannot prevent ...d5.

42...d5 43. exd5

Avoiding this capture makes little difference. For example 43. ♖c6 dxe4 44. dxe4 ♖f7 45. ♖c7+ ♜g8 followed by ♖f7, ♜g7-f6/h6-g5 and then penetration with the light-squared bishop to, say, a2 threatening ♖b1 and if then ♖b7 ♖c4 followed by ♖d3 wins.

43... ♖xd5 44. ♖e2 ♖e6 45. ♖c6 ♖e7

46. ♖e1 ♖d7 47. ♖a6 ♖f5 48. ♖e2 ♖c7 Black's pieces stand superbly. White can only move his rook back and forth.

49. ♖a8

49. ♖f6 is impossible owing to 49...e4.

49... ♖b6



Here the game was adjourned. After the resumption the game was quickly concluded:

50. ♖b8+ ♖a5 51. ♖b7 ♖a4 52. ♖b8 ♖a3 53. ♖b7 ♖e6! 54. ♖g7 ♖d5 55. ♖xg6 ♖f3+ 56. ♖f1 ♖b2 57. ♖a6 ♖c2 58. ♖e6 ♖d2 59. ♖e8 ♖e2+ 60. ♖g2 ♖e1 61. ♖f8 ♖f1+ 62. ♖g1 ♖xd3 63. ♖f7 ♖e4 64. ♖h2 ♖f1! 65. ♖f8 ♖f3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

Former Czech, now American, grandmaster **Lubos Kavalek** goes back in time to the 'vineyards' of his junior days. The columnist of the Washington Post tells the story behind the 'Czech Double-Punch' to spice up your Closed Sicilian with 3.g4.

Players of the Dutch Defence who think that 1...e6 avoids the Staunton Gambit are in for a real surprise. **Nigel Povah** explains the ins and outs of the Deferred Staunton Gambit.

Superior waiting tactics have been advocated before in the SOS-series. **Igor Glek** presents a strong case for 3...h6 in the English Opening. Our Russian author relates how it may be worth your while to lose some time to transfer a 1.c4-position into a Rossolimo Sicilian with colours reversed.

Are those Réti set-ups bothering you? Black can alter the course of play with ...a6 and ...b5. **Adrian Mikhalchishin** shows that this gambit, invented by Oleg Romanishin, gives Black sufficient counterplay. Inspired by Alvis Vitolinsh, our man from Lvov feels that early ...b5 aggression is also playable in the Nimzo-Indian.

Meeting 5.♖e2 in the Ruy Lopez with 5...♗e7 is the umpteenth invention of Oleg Romanishin. **Dorian Rogozenko** relates how shocked he was when he faced the early queen move. He candidly reveals that his first thought was that Black had made a mouse slip. Rogozenko found out the hard way, and shares his thoughts.

Talking of creative chess players we might as well mention Ashot Nadanian's latest

quirk: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 h6. Hungarian trainer **Tibor Karolyi** analyses the extended king's fianchetto that Nadanian favours these days.

If you play the Slav you might find it hard to meet the solid 4.♖c2. **Stefan Löffler** has the perfect SOS-solution for you. Just lose a tempo with 4...c5.

Dutch IM **Mark van der Werf** has co-authored a book on the Noteboom Variation in the past. This time he delves less deeply in favour of 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4: the 'Improved London System'. You will find out why experts like Luc Winants and Jonathan Rowson prefer to develop their bishop first.

Not satisfied with a mere opening surprise? Then you might be in for the shocking 1.d4 c6 2.c4 b5. Belgian IM Michel Jadoul first played his brainchild in the Belgian city of Malines and called it the Malinoise Defence. His most notable follower is **Ian Rogers**. The Australian GM is your analytical guide in the complications that follow.

Botvinnik liked to play 4.d4 in the English Four Knights. The most common reply is 4...exd4 5.♖xd4 ♗b4, but according to **Sergey Tiviakov** you will not equalize easily by following the herd. The Dutch GM strongly recommends you to push the e-pawn to e4.

Hikaru Nakamura is one of the most original and daring young players around. The American has even played 2.♖b5 against the Sicilian. In comparison, his Sicilian win against Felgaer was accomplished in more sedate fashion. Check out 4.a3.



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